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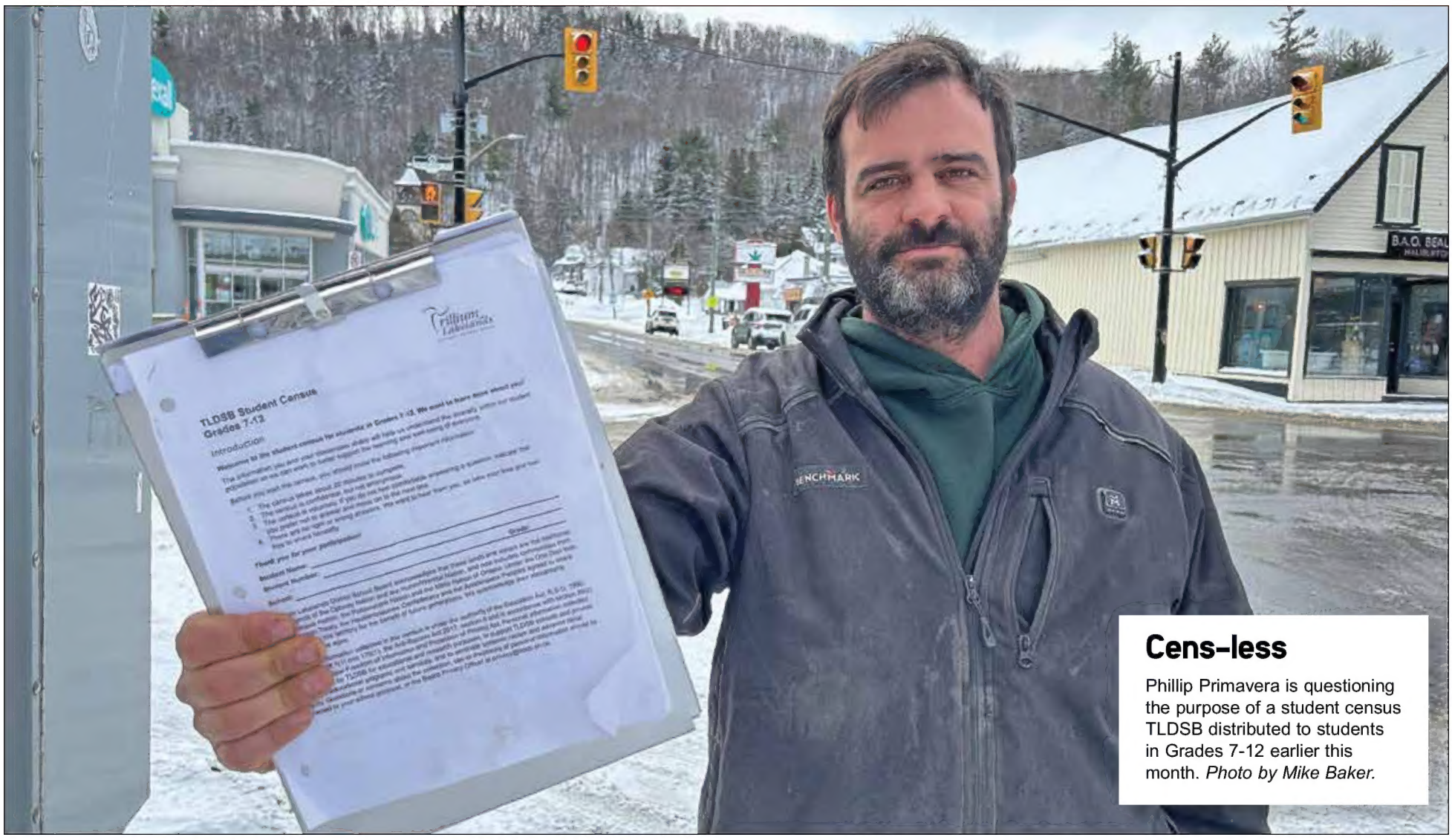

Cens-less

Phillip Primavera is questioning the purpose of a student census TLDSB distributed to students in Grades 7-12 earlier this month. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

Parents question school board census

By Mike Baker

Haliburton parents Phillip Primavera and Minna Schleifenbaum have blasted Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) for its every-two-year student census.

They are questioning why the public institution needs to know "sensitive" information about a child's race, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Distributed to youth in Grades 7-12 in the classroom March 3, TLDSB said the data provides valuable information that helps to improve strategic planning, programming and services with a focus on student achievement and engagement.

This is the third time the school board has collected this information, following previous efforts in 2022 and 2024. A scaled-back version was sent home with students in kindergarten to Grade 6 for parents to fill out between March 3-10.

TLDSB noted the census wasn't mandatory as parents had the chance to opt out, though they had to do so by Feb. 12.

Primavera said he made sure his three school-aged children did not participate.

"Parents entrust educators with the responsibility of teaching academic subjects such as math, science, reading, writing and the practical skills kids need to succeed in life. Schools are there to educate our children, not to collect deeply personal information from them," Primavera said.

"Even if participation is voluntary, asking

Continued **'TLDSB'** on page 2

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TLDSB: survey was voluntary

Continued from page 1

some of these questions of minors raises real concerns with me and many other parents about privacy, age appropriateness and the role of schools versus families. Parents want transparency on why this information is being collected and, most importantly, how this is improving the education our children receive," he added.

TLDSB communications manager, Carolynne Bull, said the census is part of Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards.

Bull noted all questions are grade-level appropriate and consistent with Ontario's health and physical education curriculum, which was revamped in 2019. Questions regarding sexual orientation and gender were not included in the lower-age census, Bull confirmed.

"The purpose is to identify barriers so that TLDSB can work to address them and to identify areas of strength that can be built upon," Bull said.

Census results are assessed alongside student achievement data to help the board understand how identities, school experiences and academic success relate to one another.

There are 11 questions included in the older-age census, with Bull confirming five are required by the province. That includes information on first language; Indigenous identity; ethnic origin; race; and religion, creed, spiritual affiliation or belief.

Questions on gender identity sexual orientation and socio-economic status are recommended but not required.

Bull said only 0.77 per cent of parents/guardians with students in Grades 7-12 opted out of the survey.

> *"Parents entrust educators with the responsibility of teaching academic subjects… not to collect deeply personal information from them"*
>
> ***Phillip Primavera***

Going public

Primavera posted a letter he sent to TLDSB to his social media channels March 9 – within a few days it had been shared over 50 times and drew 3,200 interactions. He said many people supported his stance.

In it, he asked for tangible evidence of how information collected could be used to improve the school curriculum.

"We live in a society where data is the most important thing, but I haven't seen anything that suggests having access to this information is a positive thing or helps with a child's education," he said. "I don't believe there's any benefit at all."

The Highlander asked for specific examples where data had been used to enhance TLDSB programming or adapt the curriculum.

As an example, she said "the Indigenous Student Success Team was established in response to census data to directly support Indigenous students in schools." Bull added it also led to greater supports for youth who identify as LGBTQ+.

While there haven't been specific changes to what students are taught, Bull said TLDSB has used data "to identify our equity seeking groups" and engaged with curriculum experts to support classroom-level work so all students see themselves represented in work materials provided at school.

"In order for TLDSB to be culturally responsive, we need to understand the identities of the population," Bull added.

Primavera said many young people are impressionable and believes raising and discussing issues around gender identity and sexual orientation is inappropriate – especially for kids not yet in high school.

"Something like this could put an idea into their head and get them thinking about things that kids don't really need to be thinking about," Primavera said.

"Questions of a sexual nature or involving religious or familial matters should be directed 100 per cent to parents. I feel like the school board is putting a lot of unnecessary stress on these kids by pushing things like this," he added.

Bull reiterated the census is voluntary.

"Any question can be skipped… TLDSB respects an individual's choice not to participate in the survey, not to answer a question, or opt children out of participating altogether," she said.

Parent councils chime in

Lauren Adelsen, chair of the Stuart Baker Elementary School (SBES) parent council, said she hadn't heard any major concerns from families.

"The intentions behind the census are good, and they are trying to identify areas of the school environment that could use more support and resources," Adelsen said. "However, it is concerning and complicated because the census is not anonymous and asking students directly can introduce some topics that families would prefer to discuss at home."

Andrea Hogan, chair of the J.D. Hodgson parent council, said she hasn't received any negative feedback from parents, but understands why some feel uneasy.

While Bull says letters were sent home in February letting parents know about the survey, with more information posted online, Hogan feels TLDSB could have done a better job promoting it.

"Greater transparency from the outset, particularly by sharing survey questions directly with parents in advance, rather than making it onerous for parents to request access, would build trust and allow for more informed participation," Hogan said.

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THIS WEEK:
Throwing the School Bus Under the School Bus

Highlander news

Haliburton hospital gets advanced X-ray

By Lisa Gervais

Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) has installed a new, fully-community funded, state-of-the-art, X-ray system in its diagnostic imaging wing.

The health services announced the news March 11.

HHHS said the installation of the Siemens Ysio X.pree marks a significant upgrade to the hospital's X-ray system, that had served the diagnostic imaging department since 2014.

They added one of the system's key advantages is advanced automation, which simplifies positioning by allowing the X-ray tube and detector to move automatically into preset exam positions, enabling technologists to set up exams quickly and consistently.

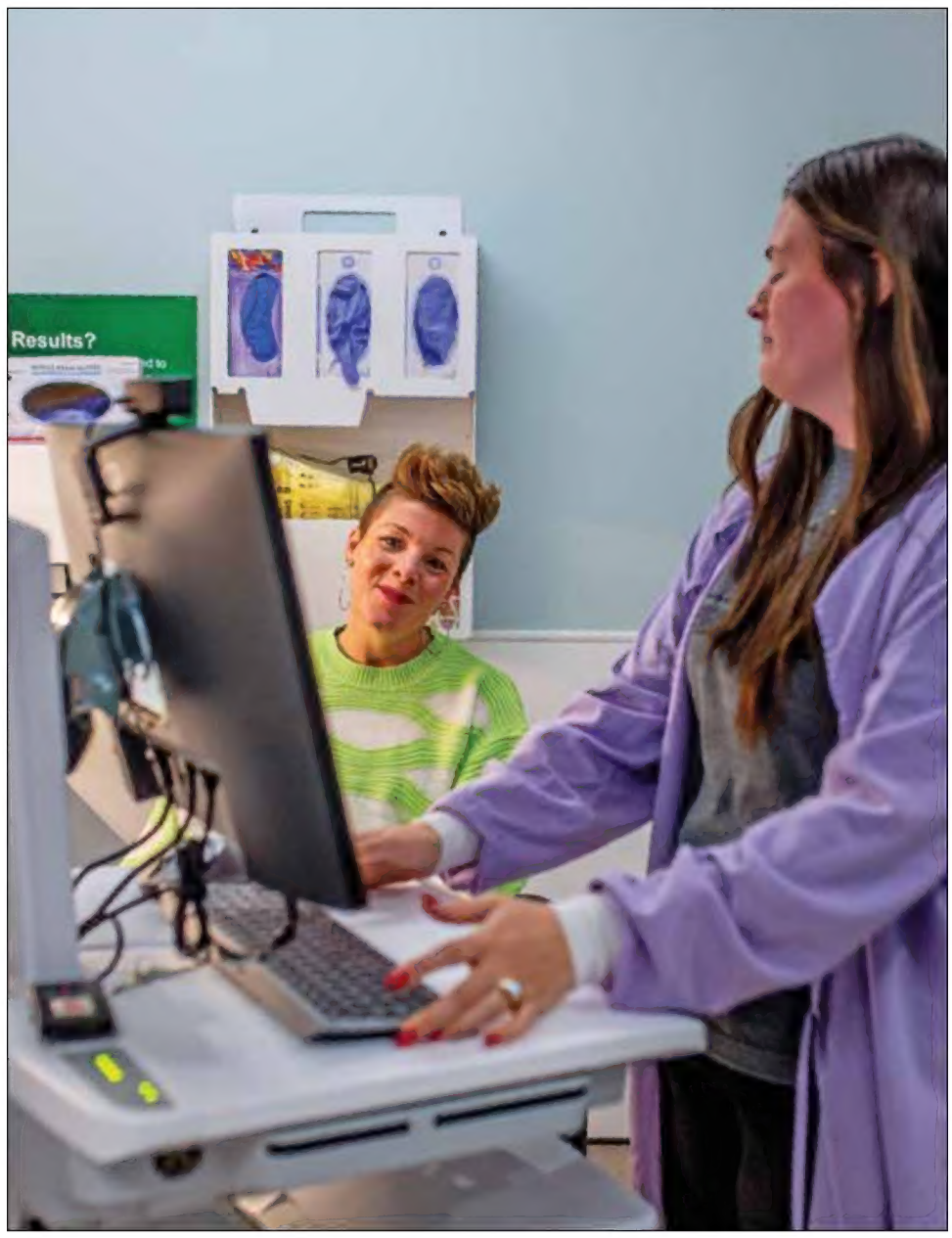
The system MaxTouch touchscreen interface on the tube head allows technologists to adjust settings, verify patient information, and review images directly at the patient's side, eliminating the need to return to the main console, helping streamline exams while improving the patient experience.

The system also introduces Virtual Ortho, an advanced imaging application that creates long-length orthopedic images; such as full spine or lower-limb studies by seamlessly stitching together multiple X-ray exposures into a single high-quality image for accurate measurement, diagnosis, and pre-operative planning.

Previously, patients requiring this specialized imaging were often referred to Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay or Peterborough Regional Health Centre. HHHS said with this capability now available locally, patients can access the important diagnostic service closer to home, reducing the need for travel.

HHHS's integrated director of diagnostics, Gail Kennedy, said "the evolution of imaging technology over the past decade has been remarkable. The Ysio X.pree allows us to provide faster exams, enhanced image quality, and improved patient safety, all while supporting the ergonomic health of our technologists. This investment ensures our community continues to receive high-quality diagnostic care close to home."

Executive director of the HHHS Foundation, Melanie Klodt Wong, added "our community continues to show what's possible when people come together. Thanks to the generosity of donors through the Here for You in the Highlands campaign, this new X-ray machine will help ensure patients can access the care they need when they need it."



Chief communications officer, Lauren Ernst, back, with medical radiation technologist, Amanda Gilkes. *Photo courtesy of HHHS/Amanda Rowden.*

HHHS said the new X-ray space has been thoughtfully designed to be ergonomically supportive for staff and more spacious and comfortable for patients.

"HHHS extends its sincere gratitude to the community for making this investment in local health care possible. Together, we are strengthening diagnostic services, embracing innovation, and continuing our commitment to delivering exceptional care in the Haliburton Highlands," the health services said.

Since 2024, the service has spent $6 million on a CT scanner, mammography service and now X-ray.

HHHS added that, beginning March 16, changes will also be implemented in the emergency department (ED) to support improved workflow and better serve the community.

Ernst said, "we are making changes in the ED to improve patient flow, and converting the room previously used for X-ray into a mental health room to support community members and families when they need a private space, and more."

CT cuts ambulance trips

The director of the Haliburton County Ambulance Service said there has been a significant decrease in the call volume for inter-facility transfers since the CT scanner began operating in July 2024.

In the past, the local service was taking people to hospitals in Lindsay, Peterborough and Bracebridge.

Michael Slatter said from 2020 to 2023, the number of inter-facility transfers had been steadily increasing year over year. He added the 2024 numbers were trending on par with 2023 until a noted decrease in July, with a significant difference from August to December of 2024.

"With a full year of data, 2025 shows that the downward trend of inter-facility transfers continued with a 67 per cent decrease from the 2023 peak," he said.

Slatter said a single inter-facility transfer takes an average of four to six hours out of a 12-hour shift – but they'd reduced the average of three transfers per day in 2023 to one per day in 2025. He said that equates to a greater ability to maintain paramedic coverage throughout Haliburton County without the need to immediately add additional ambulances.

Slatter noted a positive impact on vehicle mileage and fuel costs. From 2020-2023, there was a 32 per cent increase in yearly mileage from 345,815 total kilometres to 478,669 total kilometres. From 2023-2025 there was a 19 per cent decrease in yearly mileage from 478,669 total kilometres to 395,553 total kilometres. He said the savings on fuel is a little more difficult due to the market, however, from 2023-2025 there has been a 27 per cent decrease in fuel expenses.

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Highlander news

New smiling faces at food bank

By Mike Baker

Tracey Gilbert feels like she's getting back to her roots after taking over as manager of the Minden Community Food Centre (MCFC).

Replacing the recently-retired Jean Munroe, Gilbert has spent the past couple of weeks learning just how big a role MCFC plays in the community. She started her new position March 9. A new assistant manager, Stephanie Butchart, started March 16, replacing the also-retired Lynette Gray.

It's a return to frontline service for Gilbert, who has spent the past 15 years working in publishing, with Patient News in Haliburton. Before that, she was a PSW supporting the elderly in homes across the County.

"Helping people has been part of my plan right from the get-go. That's my passion and what I enjoy," she said. "Because I had kids, I needed more of a 9-5 job… but now that they're grown, I'm really excited to take on this challenge and do whatever needs to be done to help people in our community."

MCFC isn't completely foreign to Gilbert – she assisted with social media promotion last summer and has volunteered with the holiday hamper program for years. At the community level, she's one of the helpers involved with the annual Canada Day fishing derby in Minden.

Gilbert said she already feels the weight of her new job. Since 2019, MCFC has seen demand for service soar, with the food bank more than doubling its clientele over the past six years. With the current economic uncertainty, demand is only climbing, she said.

"At minimum, we're seeing between five to 10 new clients per month, which really adds up over the course of a year. Through January and February, we served an average of 420 people each month," Gilbert said. As of April 2025, MCFC was serving an average of 352 people per month.

Responding to the increased need, MCFC has upped the amount of food it gives out to people. For years, they provided four days' worth of food every month. That was then changed to four days of food every three weeks but now, Gilbert said they're handing out seven days of food every three weeks.

Tracey Gilbert has taken the reins as manager at the Minden Community Food Centre. *Photo by Mike Baker*

As a result, the organization's budget for 2026 has spiked - up to $356,000 from $313,000, a 14 per cent increase. Since MCFC doesn't receive any form of steady funding from municipal, provincial or federal governments, the bulk of that is sourced from the community.

Dollo's Foodland, Easton's Valu-Mart and Coneybeare's butcher shop regularly donate food, with money brought in through annual fundraisers such as Jump in the Lake, which Gilbert confirmed will return this spring.

Olympian event

A new fundraiser has been scheduled next month, April 11, at the Minden Curling Club. It features a three-course meal prepared by Aaron Walker, co-owner of McKeck's Restaurant, and a conversation with Canadian sports broadcaster Scott Russell and Olympic figure skating bronze medalist Tracy Wilson. There will be a silent auction, raffle and 50/50 draw. There's seating for 70 people with tickets $125 per person. Gilbert said there are only 20 tickets left. She's hoping it brings in $8,000 to $10,000.

Gilbert said she wants to establish a partnership with Archie Stouffer Elementary School to ensure all students have access to nutritious lunches.

For anyone in need of assistance, Gilbert says people will always be welcome at MCFC.

"There is no income threshold for service – we're not turning anyone away. We're here to support, not to judge. We are here to give our clients the most warm, welcoming experience possible so they can feed themselves and their families," she said.

To register, people need to present photo ID, disclose their address and how many people live within their household. For more information, visit www.mindencommunityfoodcentre.ca.

Highlands East 'wizardry' reduces tax hike

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Municipality of Highlands East approved its 2026 budget March 10, finalizing a 4.71 per cent tax rate increase.

The approval of the financial document followed an effort by staff to pare down the initial tax hit, which was originally projected to be nearly six per cent last month.

CAO/treasurer Brittany McCaw said that the initial proposed increase discussed during last month's special meeting of council was 5.96 per cent. However, during the final reviews and assessment adjustments, staff managed to lower that figure by more than a full percentage point.

"I think you've been, what I'm going to call it, a wizard getting stuff pared down and getting the things in order on the budget," mayor Dave Burton said. "I'm extremely pleased with our rate that you've come up with."

The final version of the budget included what McCaw described as a "minor change" following an equipment breakdown in the public works department.

Rather than putting $70,000 into a reserve fund for a future grader purchase, council agreed to reallocate those funds into the capital account to purchase and install a new transmission for an existing grader. McCaw noted that the reallocation of funds had "no impact to the budget" or the overall levy, but was essential because "otherwise, the grader would have been out of service."

What that means for local taxpayers is that the 4.71 per cent municipal increase translates to an additional $27.98 per $100,000 of assessed property value for the municipal portion alone. When the County of Haliburton and education rates are factored in, the total tax bill increase rises to $42.52 per $100,000, the treasurer explained.

She went on to describe how local tax dollars are distributed with 59 per cent remaining within Highlands East, 27 per cent to the County of Haliburton and 14 per cent for education.

As for the budget itself, roads account for nearly half of the municipal spending at 44.83 per cent, while policing and general government represent 15.59 per cent and 17.18 per cent respectively.

While deputy mayor Cecil Ryall made a lighthearted critique of the accessibility of the budget report, noting that he "needed a magnifying glass to read it," the elected official was happy with the numbers. "You've done a wonderful job."

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Highlander news

School's Cool may get County lifeline

By Lisa Gervais

A decision by the County of Haliburton - on whether or not to partially fund SIRCH's School's Cool program – will officially be made April 8 after the March 11 council meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions.

Director of community outreach, Sue Tiffin, is recommending that a request for funding be approved.

Tiffin said the County has a community health and well-being levy to support funding of non-jurisdictional, but essential, community needs, as they arise.

The School's Cool program organized by SIRCH Community Services did not receive federal funding this year, and executive director Gena Robertson told *The Highlander* earlier this month she thought it would not run in 2026.

But Tiffin said SIRCH staff had worked to raise partial funding from donors for the program to continue, but require up to $7,500 to be fully-funded. It's estimated a single six-week program for 20 children costs $30,000.

"Funding for the School's Cool program would be provided from the community health and well-being fund included in the community safety and well-being department's operational budget," Tiffin said.

The County of Haliburton developed the 0.5 per cent levy in the 2026 budget.

Tiffin said it is to enable the County to set aside contingency funds within the levy, ensuring the community can remain resilient in the face of external health crises or non-jurisdictional challenges.

Tiffin said, "by setting aside funds specifically for programs and supports, the reserve improves fiscal stability, enables timely responses to emerging social determinants of health and well-being, and reduces the need for ad hoc reallocations or emergency measures."

She stressed that under the new program, the County does not transition into a program provider, but facilitates and supports initiatives by other service providers and groups.

"Potential program supports and initiatives will vary by year and in duration. Levy funds can support expanding existing programs, supplement programs, and respond to urgent community or organization and agency needs."

SIRCH Community Services has run the School's Cool program in Haliburton County for the past 25 years. It was designed to address a school readiness gap and prepare children for school before kindergarten begins. The program helps children build language fluency; practical emotional regulation; strengthen peer interaction; develop independence, and engage in structured, outcome-linked play.

Families pay $120 in fees.

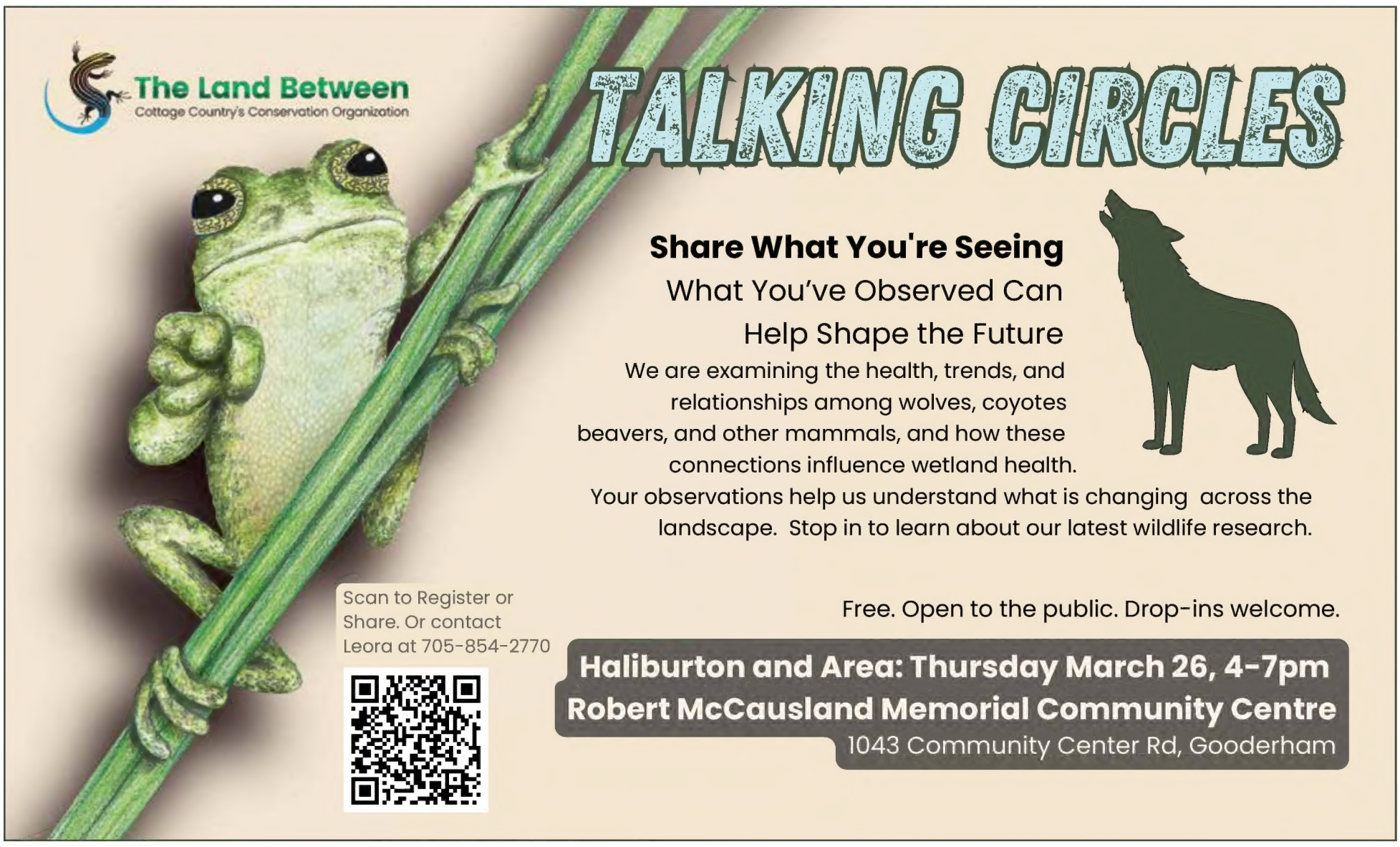
The program is annually subsidized by the federal Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) grant; however, in 2026, while the CAPC funding received by SIRCH was approved, it no longer funds early learning.

Children gather for the start of a past School's Cool graduation. *File.*

Since announcing the program won't run, SIRCH has looked for alternative sources of funding for the program and are now just $7,500 shy, Tiffin said.

Robertson told *The Highlander* that in 2025, CIBC pledged a corporate donation for this year earmarked for children, so they were able to direct it to School's Cool. The donors raised half of the funds needed, and the County is expected to approve the $7,500 next month.

Tiffin said "should County council approve funding the remaining financial gap for the School's Cool program, SIRCH Community Services would commit to reporting back to the County's community safety and well-being committee on the program's outcomes."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Highlander news

Final sale

Residents had one last opportunity to shop at Bernstein's General Store this week. New property owner Brandon Nimigon hosted a pay-what-you-can to sell off the store's remaining merchandise with all proceeds going to charity.
Photo by Adam Frisk

COUNTY OF HALIBURTON NEWS

Another doctor coming to the Highlands

The County's physician recruitment coordinator, Wendy Welch, said they've landed a new doctor, with Jeet George to start full-time May 1.

Welch said Dr. George will roster approximately 700 new patients. His practice structure will be three days per week with the Highlands Family Health Organization and one day per week in the emergency department in Haliburton.

Dr. George has made a six-year, full-time, commitment to Haliburton County.

Under its incentivization program, Welch said that means six, $25,000, payments, scheduled from 2026-2031.

She noted the County is currently committed to funding six full-time physicians, and one nurse practitioner in 2026, at a total cost of $183,000.

"Approval of Dr. George's medical service agreement would increase this commitment to $208,000," she said in a report to the March 11 cancelled County of Haliburton meeting.

It is also anticipated that Dr. George will also access the $15,000 moving cost reimbursement.

Welch said Dr. George holds a medical degree from the University of Kerala, India and advanced international qualifications, reflecting broad expertise in general practice, emergency medicine, and procedural anaesthesia.

He practised medicine in the UK for eight years before relocating to Australia. He has been doing a combination of family, emergency, and GP anesthesia, in Australia for the past 17 years. He has received his licence to practice medicine in Ontario.

Welch added the recruitment required a Labour Market Impact Analysis (LMIA) to be approved by the Government of Canada, which has been received.

She said Dr. George contacted staff in February 2025 in response to a job posting on the British Medical Journal website. He and his family travelled from Australia to visit Haliburton County and toured medical facilities in August 2025. The process for him to receive his licence and immigration clearance began in August.

It is estimated that approximately 8,300 residents in Haliburton County do not have a family physician. The current waitlist at the Haliburton Highlands Family Health Organization (HHFHO) is approximately 1,000, with Dr. George to take 700 of these.

"Staff is aware that Health Care Connect has a waitlist of approximately 1,000 patients. We are not certain if there is duplication," Welch said.

She added there are 10 family physicians currently practising primary care in the clinic with HHFHT.

"In conversations with their team, they have indicated there is a need for three additional family physicians to bring their staffing level to a full compliment." *(Lisa Gervais)*

ADVERTORIAL

Gardening with cute, hungry deer

By Simon Payn

A couple of summers ago, I happened upon a fawn resting in my garden at Lucas House in Haliburton. It looked peaceful, relaxed. Its mother was nibbling at the post office next door.

How wonderful, I thought. The deer are at home here. The doe is happy to leave its fawn, safe in my garden. What a lovely picture of nature in harmony with its surroundings and in harmony with me!

And then I remembered how the animals had eaten through the landscape. How the Lanceleaf Coreopsis was just about to flower when its buds were nibbled off. The expensive Pagoda Dogwood that was left with just two lonely leaves. The Pale Purple Coneflowers that never really got going.

Showing nature at its best

Lucas House is my demonstration garden. I ripped out the lawn four years ago, replacing it with hundreds, maybe thousands, of plants. The idea is to show how we can live without lawn, and how we can make something that's as attractive to us as it is to butterflies and bees.

And it is attractive. The Little Bluestem grass became the unexpected star, waving in the breeze and turning bronze in the fall.

The Slender Mountain Mint is an August insect powerhouse. It is, as they say, crawling with them.

Monarch butterflies have flocked to the Swamp Milkweed, just feet from where the fawn was resting.

Pearly Everlasting provides flowers that go from July through October. Prairie Smoke brings a touch of the weird with its feathery seeds. Strawberry and Silverweed cover the ground with green, red and silver.

And on sunny summer days, you can hear the insects. They're as loud as the traffic. The place is alive – before it was on life-support.

Why deer feel at home

Dr Ellic Weitzel, an historical ecologist and archaeologist at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, said on the Growing Greener podcast that our gardens are ideal places for deer. They like the kind of habitat we provide: not forest, but not completely open – our gardens mimic woodland edges with their young shrubs that provide both food and cover.

So it's no wonder the fawn was resting at Lucas House, close by the cover of the cedar hedge, sheltered by the building, fed by the plants.

What I've tried

I've spent four years figuring out how to live with deer. I've chosen plants they stay away from - grasses, sedges, leaves with flavour or hairs. I've used tough plants as bodyguards for tender plants, hoping the deer will give up and go elsewhere. I've sprayed with Bobbex. It stinks. It seems to work. You can buy it at Home Hardware. But you've got to use it before the deer come, not when it's too late.

The municipality has been helping, too. Not just for my garden: feeding encourages deer into areas with lots of traffic where they – or we – get hurt. So feeding them isn't allowed in the downtown. I don't know if it's working yet – perhaps.

> Our gardens mimic woodland edges with their young shrubs that provide food and shelter for deer.

This year I am upping my game. I'll be exploring using wire guards around the new shrubs I'm planting this spring. Will the wire be ugly? Maybe. Will the guards work? I don't know.

Whether my defenses work or not, the garden is working. The Coreopsis that was browsed to stubs came back thicker last year.

This coming summer, I expect to see the deer in the garden again. I will walk to the post office and notice them pluck the Coreopsis buds.

Simon Payn owns Grounded, which designs, installs and cares for ecological gardens and shorelines. Visit groundedgardens.ca.

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Editorial opinion

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To tell the story of Haliburton County each week.

To be a source of information and inspiration through stories and ideas.

To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Too much too soon

By Mike Baker

There has been a lot of chatter over the past week about a census Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) put out to its students in early March.

There were two iterations – one sent home with kids in kindergarten to Grade 6 for their parents to fill out and another that youth in Grades 7-12 completed in the classroom March 3.

Most of the questions were quite personal, seeking information about race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status and family socio-economic standing.

It should be said that this isn't anything new. It's the third time TLDSB has put out this survey, following previous versions in 2022 and 2024. This is, however, the first time we've noticed public uproar.

Parents Phillip Primavera and Minna Schleifenbaum raised the alarm online, posting about the census on Facebook. Primavera feels TLDSB is overstepping and questions why they need to know such sensitive details about their student's lives. He believes the school board should be focused on education and not interfering with matters traditionally discussed at home.

TLDSB contends the census is rolled out as part of Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards and that information is used to help the board understand how identities, school experiences and academic success relate to one another. Communications officer, Carolynne Bull, said the data helps TLDSB identify barriers to student learning and success.

It's a touchy topic and I can understand points on both sides of the argument. Though, as a parent, I find myself siding more with Primavera and Schleifenbaum.

They asked TLDSB for tangible evidence providing specifics on how the school board having this kind of information benefits student education. We asked the same thing, but the response was pretty weak.

It's true that issues around sexual orientation and gender identity are now firmly entrenched in Ontario's public school curriculum. There's a difference, though, in my mind between teaching youth about these things and helping to label and, possibly, influence them. The youngest kids fielding these questions are 12 years old – far too young.

I remember back to when I was 12 – the only things rattling around my brain were the trials and tribulations of my favourite sports teams, when and where I'd next be hanging out with my friends and what I'd be eating for my next meal. You know, typical kid stuff.

With things like this census, I think we're forcing our youth to grow up far too quickly these days. Making them think about and consider things that could have life-altering implications.

There were also questions about how many parents and guardians kids have in their home. As someone raised by a single mother, exposed to some pretty nasty trauma courtesy of an abusive father, facing something like that in a classroom with peers all around me probably would have been pretty triggering.

Sometimes, I think our institutions go too far today in their quest for knowledge and information. Some things are better left to be dealt with behind closed doors and away from the public eye.

The school board is quite right in saying the census wasn't mandatory – parents could have opted out, but the numbers suggest most didn't. I personally saw some comments online from parents saying they wish they had known so they could make sure their kids didn't participate.

This sort of pushback has nothing to do with being closed-minded, bigoted or stuck in the past and everything to do with maintaining some sort of control over the kind of things our kids are exposed to. Parents should retain that right.

Childhood is a fleeting thing – everywhere I look I see reports about anxiety rates skyrocketing among youth today. Maybe if we focused a little more on maintaining a level of innocence, instead of seeking to prematurely label these kids, things would be a little different.

A brief introduction

By Adam Frisk

Hello, Haliburton County. My name is Adam Frisk, and I'm *The Highlander*'s new Local Journalism Initiative reporter.

You might know me from media organizations such as Global and CTV News, or more recently *The Haliburton County Echo* and *Minden Times*, where I spent the past eight months covering local news.

At *The Highlander*, I'll be responsible for managing our new app that's set to launch this spring. I'm excited to be involved with such an innovative tool for a rural community that will provide readers with breaking news, local stories and community announcements all in one place and right from your phone. I will also be involved in our weekly What The Haliburton podcasts, as well as telling your stories in our weekly print edition of the paper.

A little about me. I'm an award-winning photojournalist who was born in Ottawa but spent most of my childhood and teen years in Aurora. I studied commercial photography at Sheridan College in Oakville before graduating from Loyalist College's photojournalism program in Belleville. I then went on to earn a post-graduate degree in online journalism. I've been a journalist for more than 20 years and have worked for several major Canadian media outlets.

Fresh into my career, I spent time in West Africa documenting Rotary International's efforts to eradicate polio. While in Cameroon, I photographed Rotarians and other volunteers providing the life-saving vaccine to hundreds of children. I myself administered the two-drop oral vaccine to dozens of kids.

During my time in Toronto, I worked a variety of photography jobs outside of my full-time gig, including as a member of the paparazzi, with my photographs being syndicated worldwide through Splash News agency.

In 2021, my wife and I, and our two cats, made the move from Toronto to Haliburton Village during the COVID-19 pandemic where I continued working with CTV News for a couple of years. We made the move a little earlier in life than expected as Haliburton was our retirement destination.

My family has had a cottage in the area for more than 15 years and it has always been a special place for us to race up to on a Friday of a long weekend. And I hated leaving. So, my wife and I decided to pull the trigger and make the pandemic move and we've never looked back. Now on a Monday afternoon of a long weekend, I get to wave goodbye to the cottagers who have to go back to the hustle and bustle of city life while I continue on with my life on Highlands time.

Once we got settled, I joined the camera club before taking on a freelance photography job on weekends with *The Echo*. That's when I truly fell in love with the County, the people, and the small-town charm.

As for my personal time, I'm often found walking around Head Lake Park while listening to the same music I've been listening to for the last 30-plus years. You might catch me riding my bicycle on the rail trail or snapping some photos at Ritchie Falls or Skyline Park.

I'm excited to work with the talented team at *The Highlander* and I'm looking forward to telling your stories and to share the news that matters the most to County residents.

If you have a story to share or a news tip, please reach out to me at adam@thehighlander.ca.

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

The 'poor sister'

Dear editor,

Just a congratulations for your podcast initiative.

This is a very effective method of reaching our population and, in fact, as meaningful, if not more meaningful, than the printed word. The podcast with *Highlander* owner Bram Lebo and editor Lisa Gervais relating to the removal of the dean at the Haliburton campus of the former Sir Sandford College was most welcomed.

Your exposé points out the reality I have noted for the past 50 years in this community as we endlessly see decisions made by federal and provincial governments as well as their various arms of governance.

Peterborough, in charge of our welfare as well as theirs, inevitably leads to our community being the 'poor sister' and the first to be penalized when push comes to shove in discussions relating to cost savings.

Once again, thank you for supporting our community.

Ray Selbie
Haliburton

Not 'country bumpkins'

Dear editor,

I Just listened to the latest podcast and wanted to say how well it was done and how informative it was.

Thank you. It was thoughtful, articulate and gave perspectives I need to be thinking about as a member of this community.

So many parts of the podcast you brought to light were alarming and frankly dangerous. More and more organizations seem to be heading into a totally risk-averse environment hiding under a blanket of illusions.

I agree with calls to action which will escalate issues.

There are times when I think those not living here, and in power, think we are uneducated, unthinking, country bumpkins. The lack of respect is rampant and makes me mad.

H. Fay Wilkinson
Eagle Lake

'I'll keep listening'

Dear editor,

Listened to the podcast with Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter. Excellent listening, so thank you. I was not aware you did podcasts. Great job. I'll keep listening.

Sharon Lawrence
Minden Hills

Loving your podcasts

Dear editor,

Thanks for taking the time to create these local podcasts, informative, thoughtful and timely.

Peter Smith
Haliburton

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Shirley Davison-Mark of Haliburton sent this photo of a chickadee during last week's ice storm.

HUMANS OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

Unofficial cheerleader of the Highlands

By Susan Tromanhauser

One spontaneous decision has transformed Laura Finney into the unofficial cheerleader for Algonquin Highlands. A long-forgotten reason to stop in Dorset for lunch, and a casual glance at a real estate posting, resulted in a phone call, with Finney's father announcing, "I just bought a cottage."

The family soon began vacationing on Lake of Bays. Years later, retired from firefighting in Brampton, Finney's father made the cottage his full-time home. But in 2018, circumstances changed and he made another phone call, this time with news the cottage was on the market. On her farewell weekend to cottage life, it was Finney's turn for a spontaneous decision – to sell her house in Innisfil, buy the cottage from her father, and move full-time with her husband and son to Lake of Bays.

After several years in contract work, Finney had finally just landed a full-time position with Metroland in Newmarket; but she resigned from her journalism career and moved to Algonquin Highlands without a job. Her husband soon found employment in Huntsville and her son transitioned well into grade 6 at Irwin School. Finney became the program director with Friends of Algonquin Park and "stunning early morning commutes along Hwy. 60," becoming her new norm. Finney saw beautiful sunrises she knows she would never see in the city.

As quickly as they adapted to employment, the Finneys became part of the community. They participated in Trunk or Treat, Snowball, and many activities at the Dorset Recreation Centre. The family enjoys the outdoor lifestyle of hiking year-round, swimming in the summer, and tobogganing and skating in the winter. Finney's husband is now a pro at clearing the snow from the lake and creating a rink. Finney recognizes her community involvement provides a social life and a healthy lifestyle.

As seasonal residents, the Finney family already knew their neighbours, but as full-time residents they soon knew everyone in the area. Going to Robinson's General Store is a social event. During COVID, Finney learned how "amazing the people in Algonquin Highlands are." The Dorset Facebook group became the place to offer help. Finney was in awe of how "such an awful time showed how people came together."

That dream job Finney gave up to move to Haliburton County? In 2023, Metroland moved to digital-only publication, slashing hundreds of journalism positions. Finney now works in administrative support for the township of Algonquin Highlands - although she could also be the official township cheerleader. Finney tells everyone, "Our neighbours in Muskoka get all of the attention, but there is no better place for the outdoor life than the Highlands."

Finney often eats her lunch at Elvin Johnson Park on Halls Lake and takes pictures of the landscape to send to city friends. While many look forward to retirement to take a break, Finney loves her job. She looks forward to retirement one day - as an opportunity to participate in even more activities that Algonquin Highlands has to offer.

Laura Finney. *Submitted.*

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Highlander business

Quicker process putting smiles on faces

By Mike Baker

It's been a year since the federal government improved access to needed dental procedures for low-income Canadians and County denturist Steve Kerr said his Minden practice has never been busier.

Last March, the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) was expanded to people with a household net income under $90,000 – subsidizing treatments including cleanings, fillings, extractions and dentures. According to Health Canada, around 5.2 million people are eligible for support through the program.

"It's gotten to the point now where more than half of my patients [qualify]. We've seen a big, big increase in demand, a lot more people coming through the door," Kerr told *The Highlander.*

While the program was initially rolled out for seniors aged 70 and above, it's now open to all adults, Kerr said.

One common misconception, he noted, is that people consider dentures to be cosmetic but Kerr said they can play a vital role in helping those with missing teeth chew, speak and smile more confidently. They can also prevent remaining teeth from shifting and are considered less invasive than dental implants.

Without CDCP assistance, Kerr said a set of full dentures – both top and bottom – costs around $3,100. Now, those who qualify for support pay significantly less, at $200-250 per denture.

Minden denturist Steve Kerr said new digital technology he's brought into his office has increased efficiency and comfort for local patients. *Photo submitted.*

"It's not a free program – patients do still have to co-pay, but it's nothing like it was before," Kerr said. "In our area there are a lot of people living on fixed incomes… so it makes a huge difference.

"I'm seeing a lot of patients come in who have dentures that are 30 or 40 years old. Talking to them, they never thought replacing was something they could afford. So, instead of being something that's completely out of reach, the cost is doable now for most," he added.

Kerr said his office can run direct billing with Sun Life Canada – the insurance firm that administers CDCP. "From the patients' perspective, it's just like they've got pretty good dental benefits now."

He estimates his business has seen a 30 per cent increase in patients over the past year. Open three days a week, Kerr said he typically sees 15-20 patients per day.

To keep up with increased demand, Kerr has invested in new technology to make the process for making dentures easier and quicker for patients.

In 2021, he transitioned from sculpting denture molds by hand, using wax, to doing them through a computer and 3D printer. That enabled patients to take test versions of their dentures home to try out.

"With the wax version, people got to try them for a few minutes, but if they tried to eat anything they would get destroyed instantly. Now I tell patients they have the chance to test drive before they buy," Kerr said.

Last year, he upgraded his digital scanner that he said takes thousands of pictures to help enhance design. He says that investment has paid off – both for him and his patients.

"I've decreased the amount of time it takes to create each denture by more than 50 per cent. That frees me up to see more people and also means fewer appointments per patient.

"Doing it the old school way, people would be in my chair for a minimum of five appointments, sometimes as many as seven. Now, we're cutting three appointments off on average," Kerr said. "The quality of the product is just as good, if not better, and it can all be done much more efficiently."

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS HEALTH SERVICES

Board Member Recruitment for 2026/2027

Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) delivers high-quality health services to residents, cottagers, and visitors to Haliburton County and the surrounding area. We work closely with local and regional partners to optimize health and wellbeing in Haliburton County by providing access to essential health services, including Emergency and Inpatient, Long-Term Care, and Community Support Services. For more information about our organization please visit our website at www.hhhs.ca.
HHHS is seeking strategic, experienced, engaged, and talented members of our community to join us in pursuit of this vision by participating as a voluntary member of our Board of Directors or as a Community Representative on one of the Board's Standing Committees.

At a minimum, board members should expect to devote approximately 10 hours of time per month to HHHS business, including attendance at monthly board and committee meetings both in-person and virtually.

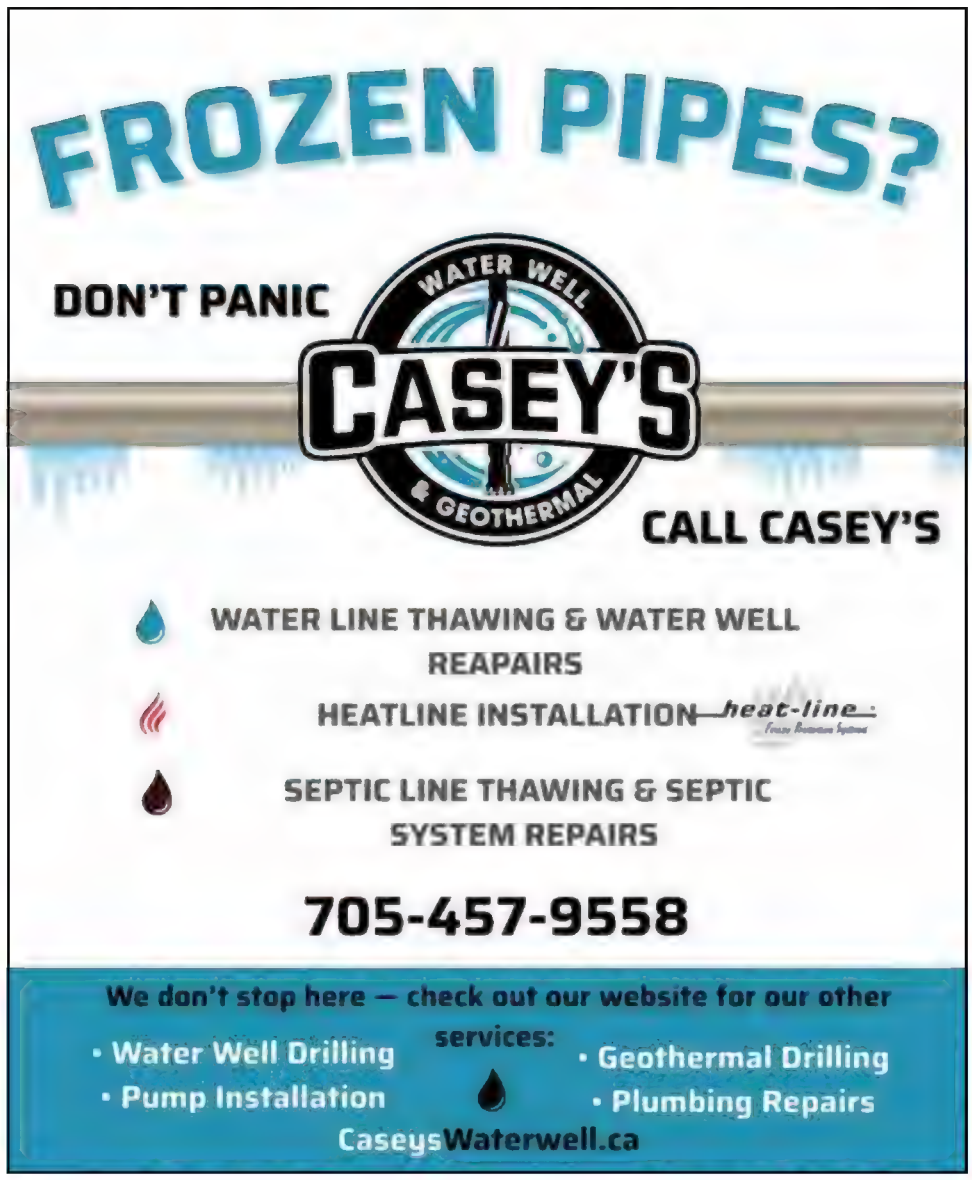
Annual board recruitment is based on vacancies and the requirements identified through a Board Skills Matrix that ensures a complementary balance of knowledge, skills and experience. **This year we are seeking individuals with a background in legal, and in construction, engineering or project management. We also continue to look for individuals with backgrounds in governance, finance & accounting, clinical and patient & healthcare advocacy.**

How to be Considered
Interested applicants are requested to complete an application form and submit it along with a covering letter and resume via email quoting "HHHS Board Recruitment" in the subject line to mhenry@hhhs.ca by **April 14, 2026**. All applications will be acknowledged and held in confidence.

Application forms and additional board information can be found at:
https://hhhs.ca/governance/leadership-board-and-management

Inquiries can be directed to:

Email: mhenry@hhhs.ca
Phone: (705) 457-2527



Highlander environment

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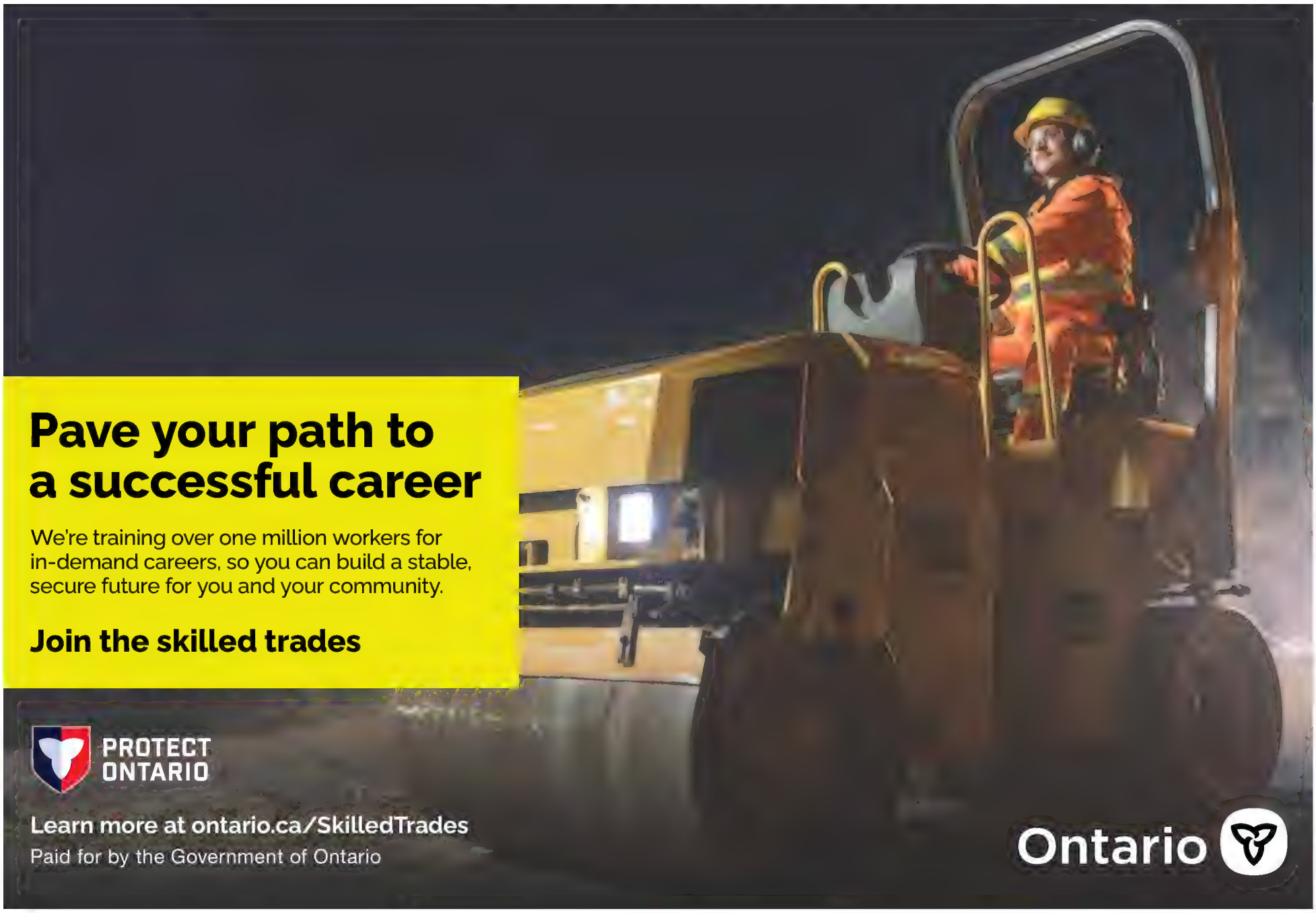
Wacky weather

It's been quite a week in the Haliburton Highlands, beginning with last week's freezing rain event, followed by numerous weather alerts as Mother Nature cannot decide if it's winter or spring. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*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Highlander environment

Darian Carpenter shows off an Ecopassage for turtles. *Photo submitted.*

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CALL FOR QUESTIONS OR RESERVATIONS 705 754 2188

Ecopassages saving Highlands' turtles

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

For turtles that call Haliburton Highlands home, survival is a numbers game with increasingly deadly odds.

According to researchers with the Turtle Guardians, a program of The Land Between charity, a single snapping turtle may have to cross a roadway up to 16 times in a single migration season.

"You can't redirect a turtle," Leora Berman, founder and chief operating officer of The Land Between and Turtle Guardians, said in an interview last week. "This is the problem. It's an enormous problem for turtles. And for drivers, but really for turtles."

The organization has been quietly mapping and studying turtle habitats since 2010, and has recently reached a major milestone by completing what is believed to be the longest road study of its kind in North America, Berman said.

"We're beginning to use that data to look at hot spots, like where are the worst spots for turtles," she said.

The Turtle Guardians identified 970 potential crossing sites on rural routes across the Highlands, 97 of those in Haliburton County alone. However, identifying a problem site is easier than fixing it, Berman said. After accounting for driveways and technical constraints, researchers found that only five per cent of these sites are currently feasible for high-priority infrastructure.

"There are no turtles left in the cities because of roads and habitat loss," she said. "Here, we are working our butts off to make sure our great-great-grandchildren can still see them."

The organization has been testing a "pioneering" ecopassage fencing system at four priority locations. Berman explained that while past industrial attempts, like those on Hwy. 69, have faced failures due to frost heave and maintenance issues, this new local design focuses on durability and simplicity.

"Hwy. 69 is a classic example where millions of dollars were spent on this fencing system with areas where animals could get off the road," she said. "But there were so many failures in it that now there are hardly any animals left in that whole zone."

The design uses repurposed materials like heavy-duty steel barrels and a "skateboard ramp" concept that can be entirely backfilled, ensuring small animals like snakes and frogs don't get trapped on the road. Another design concept features a folding fence system for steep areas that can be deployed in the spring and removed for the winter.

The project is awaiting $10,000 in engineering testing and patent approval. Once it gets the green light, the design could one day be adopted as a standard by the Ministry of Transportation and municipal road departments.

Berman noted that long-time residents report a total absence of the massive snapping turtles that once dominated the waterways.

"Mortality is going up, not down," she said. "If you lose 20 per cent of the turtles in your area, they'll be extinct within 20 years."

As the summer season approaches, Turtle Guardians is seeking volunteers for road patrols and support for the excavation and incubation program, now the largest in Ontario. Residents are also encouraged to call the hotline at 705-854-2888 to report injured or nesting turtles.

"Adults are essential for the next generations," Berman said. "Without breeding adults, you're done."

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Highlander arts

Elbows up for Haliburton's Doc(k) Day

By Lisa Gervais

Canadian wildlife artist, Robert Bateman, is just one of the special guests who will attend Doc(k) day in Haliburton April 11.

Those Other Movies (TOM) and Doc(k) Day, which organize the one-day documentary film festival, announced March 16 that Bateman, Bristol Foster, and director Alison Reid, of *The Art of Adventure*, will be coming to introduce their movie and answer questions after the screening.

Myra Stephen, on behalf of the committee, said "as young men in their 20s, Bateman and spirited biologist Foster embark on a globe-trotting adventure in the 1950s in a Land Rover they name the Grizzly Torque. It is a powerful story of environmental activism, youthful naivety, human connections and respect for all living things."

Reid uses footage taken by Foster and artwork by Bateman.

The other special guests are Ron Mann and Mairéad Filgate, who'll discuss their film project, *Clairtone*. Mann directs this tale about the rise and fall of Clairtone Sound Corporation, an audacious Canadian electronics company founded by Peter Munk and David Gilmour during the vibrant 1960s. It features dancer and choreographer, Filgate.

Haliburton audiences have delighted in Filgate's performances locally in Dusk Dances, Sculpture Forest Re-imagined, Note the Weather and more.

Stephen said they'll bring four documentaries: three full-length and one shorter film to the Northern Lights Performing Art Pavilion for this year's event.

"It is an opportunity to come together as a community to learn, reflect, and be inspired. We are excited this year to present an all-Canadian line up with films that touch upon the immigrant experience, the natural world, artistic pursuits, community contributions, dementia care, entrepreneurship and adventure."

The schedule:

- 10 a.m. *I am the Art: Nobuo Kubota* (85 min.)
- Picnic lunch. Bring your own lunch; eat and chat together in the cafeteria.
- 1:30 p.m. *Clairtone* (73 min.)
- 3:30 p.m. *We Lend a Hand - The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes* (49 min.)
- 7:30 p.m. *The Art of Adventure* (90 min.) + Q&A with director Alison Reid

Other films include *I am the Art: Nobuo Kubota*, which explores the life and artistic journey of 92-year-old Nobuo Kubota, a Japanese-Canadian artist whose work spans painting, sculpture, sound, music, installation, and film.

The other is *We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story of the Ontario Farmerettes*, which reveals the true story of the Ontario Farm Service Force. It put 40,000 volunteer teenage girls to work between 1941 and 1952, arriving from different parts of Ontario and Quebec to many locations in Southwestern Ontario. Their job was to ensure critical food production during a perilous period of modern history. Most had no prior farming experience. They worked under relentless weather conditions and schedules and produced hundreds of thousands of tons of food that was shipped to the frontlines to feed starving European populations and even prisoners of war. Many of the women are now in their late 90s.

Robert Bateman is coming for Doc(k) Day this year. *File photo.*

VIP passes for the full day are available at thoseothermovies.com - $30 for Those Other Movies seasons pass holders and $35 for general public. A limited number of single tickets for all films will be for sale on April 11, starting when doors open at 9 a.m.

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A message from the Kawartha Lakes Haliburton Ontario Health Team
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Training the next generation of actors

By Mike Baker

Instead of perfecting pirouettes and practicing advanced dance routines, a group of County kids have been learning the art of theatre at Haliburton's Skyline Dance Studio in recent weeks.

Skyline has partnered with local performing troupe Ctrl-ART-Del to offer guided instruction to seven youth, teaching basic stage skills every Saturday morning since Feb. 7. The 90-minute sessions, led by Ctrl-ART-Del volunteers, were made possible thanks to a $6,135 donation from the Arts Council Haliburton Highlands and the Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association.

"This is a three-part connection, where Skyline offers the space, Ctrl-ART-Del leads programming and the Arts Council funds it," said Ella Leis, stage and production manager with Ctrl-ART-Del. She said the initiative got underway after a chat with Skyline's executive director, Amanda Conn, last fall.

"They have a musical theatre program they run as a dance class and get so many kids coming out for it, who absolutely love it and wanted an opportunity to learn more," Leis said. "There aren't too many theatre opportunities or classes for young children in Haliburton County. We normally work with teens but have wanted to branch out to younger demographics for years."

Hannah Klose, the troupe's assistant director and fellow founding member, said she was one of the first instructors to volunteer. Over the past few weeks, she, Leis and other Ctrl-ART-Del members have worked on performing building blocks, including movement and voice work.

Ctrl-ART-Del's Tim Nicholson and 13-year-old Joshua Morgan perform a scene from *Oliver Twist* with. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

The key, she said, is teaching youth to find comfort within their body so that when they do take to the stage, they can keep a handle on their nerves. They started with fun games before advancing into practicing monologues and performing scene studies.

In week three, the students performed a piece from *The Wizard of Oz*. On March 14, at their final gathering, they took turns delivering individual segments from favourites such as *Oliver Twist* and *The Little Mermaid.*

Thirteen-year-old Joshua Morgan said this was his first exposure to any kind of in-person acting class, noting he was grateful for the opportunity to learn from experienced performers.

"Acting is one of my passions. I really like to make people laugh," Morgan said. "The biggest thing I learned was that punctuation means pause.

"On a scale of one to 10, I'd have to say this was an 11," he added, saying he'd like to take what he's learned to the stage some day through Ctrl-ART-Del.

Leis and Klose say that's the ultimate goal – sparking enough interest to create the theatre group's next generation of performers.

"We try to instill the important foundations of theatre so that when these kids start to mature, they already have an understanding of how to stand on stage, how to be still, how to breath and speak loudly," Klose said. "It's all about making them feel comfortable in a theatre setting."

With the theatre-based program proving popular, Leis said they're hoping to run another next year. There are two further sessions coming up before that, also funded by the Arts Council. One is more musically focused, working on songwriting, and the other on pottery.

"The music one is going to be more teen focused, with the pottery for younger kids in that seven to 12 range. They'll be running throughout spring and into summer," Leis said, noting they're free to participants thanks to the Arts Council money.

Register at Leis at info@ctrlartdel.ca.

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GARDENS

Highlander events

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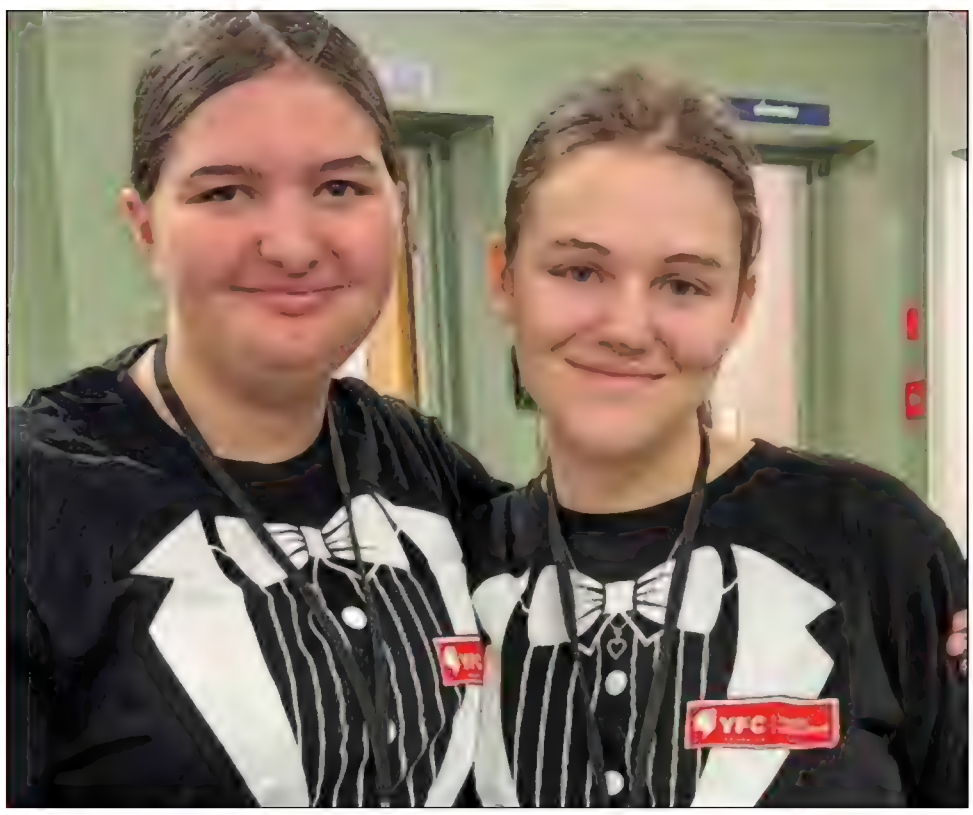

Flipping for funds

Haliburton Youth Unlimited had a successful second annual pancake fundraiser March 7 at Lakeside Church. More than 100 community members attended to help them raise money to support their spring programs. Weekly, Youth Unlimited provides free after school programs for youth Grades 4-12 at the Bridge Youth Centre in Haliburton. Community director Leanne Young said more than 80 youth attend regularly, "benefitting from the free programming and positive community and activities." For more information about programs, or how to donate to support programming, go to www.yfc.ca/haliburton-highlands/ or contact them at haliburton@kawyu.ca *(Lisa Gervais)*

Above: Dakota Billings and Ava Clark dressed to serve. *Submitted.*

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS HEALTH SERVICES

Haliburton Highlands Health Services Now Seeking Members for Community Advisory Committee

Haliburton Highlands Health Services is seeking community-minded individuals interested in serving on a Community Advisory Committee, responsible for providing advice and insight to its Board of Directors on the delivery and future planning of community services in Haliburton County. The Advisory Committee will also provide linkages to the community on trends and issues related to the community services.

Key functions of the Community Advisory Committee will include providing advice on:

- Needs of community services clients
- The unique and diverse needs of the Haliburton County community
- Further opportunities for partnership and collaboration
- Best approaches for communicating with the community
- Feedback on the delivery of community services and future planning for services

The Committee generally meets on Thursday mornings 7 times per year.

If you feel you have the time, energy and commitment to be a member of this year's Community Advisory Committee, then we would like to hear from you by April 14, 2026.

For further information and an application package, please contact: Michel Henry via email at mhenry@hhhs.ca OR phone Michel at (705) 457-1392 Extension 2248.

Highlander events

Horsing around in the snow

Walkabout Farm Therapeutic Riding Association took a late winter flurry in stride March 14, proceeding with its planned 'Hike with Horses' event despite overnight snowfall. Owner Jennifer Semach said about a dozen people attended, enjoying strolls around her property's trail system with Walkabout's 10 horses – Coconut, Sweet Pea, Poppy, Sassy, Apollo, Monty, Gracie, Valentino, Julia and Ginny. The non-profit offers equine-assisted therapy programs through spring, summer and fall. Semach said there will be another Hike with Horses event April 11, with the popular Friendship Fri-YAY community drop-in resuming May 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The recreational equine assisted participation (REAP) program, where Semach takes some of Walkabout's miniature horses into local long-term care homes, starts again in May, running every Monday. For more information, visit www.walkaboutfarmtra.com. *(Mike Baker)*

Top left: Christine Hewitt, Jennifer Semach and Tony Taylor with Monty, a 20-year-old Suffolk Punch horse. Top right: Celina Johnson with Coconut, an 11-year-old miniature horse. Bottom right: Lyndsie Fliss gets up close and personal with Beau – one of Walkabout's resident non-therapy horses. *Photos by Mike Baker.*

Voices & Votes
speaker series

03: Behind the Scenes of Municipal Leadership

Featuring former local Councillors Carol Moffatt, Andrea Roberts, and Pat Kennedy, and current Councillor in Grey Highlands, Dane Nielsen

Get an inside look at what it's like to serve in local government, from people who have done it before, and ask them your questions.

AT THE MINDEN COMMUNITY CENTRE, 55 PARKSIDE STREET, MINDEN — MARCH 25 7:00-9:00PM

04: Understanding Campaigns: How Success Happens

Featuring seasoned campaigner Lauren Hunter

Discover what a successful campaign looks like as a candidate, supporter, or voter, with practical tips and tools.

AT THE STANHOPE FIRE FIGHTERS COMMUNITY HALL, 1095 NORTH SHORE ROAD ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS — APRIL 21 7:00-8:30PM

Haliburton Highlands
Healthy Democracy Project

We are a project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, supported by the Telling Our Stories Speaker Series and the Haliburton County Development Corporation.
Credit: Photo of Pat Kennedy by The Highlander

LEARN MORE AT HHHDP.CA

Highlands Little Theatre Presents

Calendar Girls

By Tim Firth

Based on the Miramax motion picture by Juliette Towhidi and Tim Firth

Directed by Jack Brezina
Stage Manager Amy Brohm

March 24th, 25th, 27th at 7pm and March 28th at 2pm

Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion

A hilarious and heartwarming show about love, friendship and the power of a great idea!

Featuring: Norma Bingham, Elyse Boisvert, Kate Butler, Karen Frybort, Renée Griffith, Kate Hall, John Jackson, Rita Jackson, Christine Jonas-Simpson, Jordan Kovacs, Cathy McIlmurray, Elizabeth Oakley and David Zilstra

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www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/calendar-girls-saturday-march-28-matinee

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Highlands Little Theatre is a proud part of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative.

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Community members gathered at the Haliburton Legion March 13 for the Seniors Active Living Fair to establish new connections and learn about the services offered in the County for aging residents. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

Seniors find connection at active living fair

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Haliburton Legion was buzzing with conversation and connection last week, as more than 50 residents gathered for the Seniors Active Living Fair.

Organized in partnership with the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario, the March 13 event featured resources, education, and perhaps more importantly, connection.

"We love the opportunity to bring people together, to share information and community resources," Sue Tiffin, the director of community outreach for the County of Haliburton, said. "We jumped at the chance to host this."

Last June, the County of Haliburton became a Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC) operator. The fair featured 16 exhibitors and a handful of guest speakers, covering everything from health and safety to emergency preparedness and community programs.

Jon Louch, a Haliburton resident who attended with his wife, said the amount of support available within the community was eye-opening.

"I thought as a senior it was something that I could benefit from, and I was right," Louch said. "The most surprising thing [was] just how many resources are available to seniors and how to access those resources."

While some seniors struggle to find a way to stay active, Louch credited his family for keeping him moving. With a son living and working in Haliburton and two grandchildren nearby, his retirement is anything but slow.

"Instead of going to work every day, my time is entirely my own and my wife's," Louch explained. "Our grandchildren keep us motivated and busy and active... an event like this just helps us discover what else is available to us."

When asked for advice on how to encourage other seniors who might be hesitant to step out or get active, Louch had a simple message.

"There are many resources available. They're easily accessible," he said. "Just do a Google search on anything, and you'll probably find something of interest."

Social isolation is a primary concern for older adults, particularly those who have recently lost a partner or are new to the area. Tiffin said the fair aimed to tackle this by encouraging attendees to introduce themselves to their neighbours and explore group activities. She recalled an encounter from the SALC's initial launch last year that highlights why these programs are vital.

"One person came up to me, she was 80. She had been a caregiver her whole life... she had recently decided that it was now time in her life to do what she wanted and to look after herself," Tiffin said. "She was really excited about the programming opening up so that she could get out and live her life."

The director of community outreach said she was pleased with the turnout at the event and noted that many of the names on the registration list were new to her.

"Some people have come alone, some people brought a friend or got a ride from a neighbour," Tiffin explained. "It's a great event to see everyone come together and start looking at the program and asking, 'What are we going to go to together?'"

Serving pro volleyball to Haliburton County kids

By Mike Baker

After years of university play and pro-level volleyball training through Athletics Canada, Josh Edwards is preparing to pass on everything he's learned to the County's next generation of athletes.

Launching the non-profit Ascension Volleyball Club this month – the Highlands' first organized volleyball organization – Edwards said he has a long-term goal of establishing the County club as one of the best in Ontario.

"Volleyball is the fastest-growing youth sport in the province right now… our high school has had some amazing success with teams this year, both boys and girls," Edwards said. "But once the school season is done there's minimal opportunities locally for our players to develop. They have to travel out of town if they want to enhance their volleyball experience."

The Hal High junior and senior girls teams won Kawartha championships in February, with the junior and senior boys winning silver at the Central Ontario Secondary Schools Association (COSSA) finals in November.

While Edwards knows there's enough interest in running a program for high school athletes, he's testing the waters with younger kids too.

Spring volleyball programs will begin in April for youth in Grades 2-5, 6-9 and 10-12. Sessions will be held Monday and Wednesday evenings at J.D. Hodgson and Archie Stouffer elementary schools.

"That will help us to gauge interest levels in the area; to see how many kids would be willing to commit to more court time outside of their school circuits. The goal is to develop both a passion for the game as well as the skills required to reach even higher levels of competition," he said.

Ascension is an initiative he's had in the back of his mind ever since relocating to Haliburton County in 2023. Edwards said he has the backing of Volleyball Canada, who connected him with people from the Markham-based Unity Volleyball Club for pointers on building a program from the ground up.

He also has his own experience to draw from. From 2009 to 2016, he represented the Windsor Lancers in Ontario University Athletics play. He was a two-time all-star as a middle blocker. Upon graduation he received carding status from Athletics Canada – meaning he was paid to train full-time with the country's national volleyball program.

While he never appeared in international competition, Edwards spent 18 months from 2016 to 2018 honing his skills alongside some of Canada's best players.

"In that program, we looked at volleyball almost as our trade. We needed to ensure our volleyball IQ, passing, reading and serving ability were all at the highest level…

Josh Edwards has launched a new pro-level volleyball club in Haliburton County. *Photo submitted.*

I got to compete with and learn from members of the national team who have been to the Olympics," Edwards said.

Local high school coaches Allie Paul and Mike Gaffney will be assisting with the upcoming camps, which will run until June. Edwards said he'll be teaching basic skills in passing, serving and blocking as well as how to attack and defend different tactical systems. The younger groups will focus more on play and getting a feel for the game, with the older groups getting more advanced training.

He said volleyball is a great sport for developing athletes as it teaches teamwork and discipline – key skills that he says benefit anyone no matter what their goals are in life.

Edwards has also partnered with the Ontario Volleyball League (OVL) and hopes to launch competitive teams in the fall.

"We'll have access to tournaments over the next year within the OVL and will see if we can go to some exhibition tournaments in Barrie, Orillia and Peterborough as well," Edwards said. "This is an exciting new adventure and we're in it for the long haul. I can't wait to get the ball rolling here."

For more information, visit ascensionvolleyball.com or contact ascensionvolleyballhc@gmail.com.

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Lewis Hergaarden consoles Liam Oravsky after a 3-2 overtime defeat to the Newmarket Hurricanes March 14 ended the Huskies season. *Photo by Tim Bates/OJHL Images.*

Huskies fall in playoffs

By Mike Baker

The Haliburton County Huskies season is over following a 4-1 series defeat to the Newmarket Hurricanes in the opening round of the Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL) playoffs.

After dropping the first three games – losing 3-1 March 7, 3-2 March 8 and 5-2 March 10 – the blue and white stayed alive with a gritty 2-1 win on home ice March 12. They rallied from 2-0 down to send game five in Newmarket to overtime March 14 but couldn't find the goal that would have brought the series back to Minden.

Bench boss Jordan Bailey felt his young side were unfortunate against an older Newmarket team that boasted considerable firepower.

"It's never fun losing. I think when you look back, there were points where we did a really good job shutting down their highly skilled players. They're a very, very good offensive team," Bailey said. "We just needed to get that timely goal, a break here or there that just didn't come."

After losing the first game in Newmarket, Bailey thought his players responded well in game two in Minden. The home side fought for every puck and got their noses ahead through goals from Carson Durnin and Josh Hutton – giving them a 2-0 lead heading into the third.

Things fell apart in the final frame, with individual mistakes costing the Huskies dearly. Bailey felt that was a major turning point in the series.

"We had full control of that game but made three errors and Newmarket scored on all of them… that's the nature of playoff hockey," Bailey said. "I didn't think our performance that period was bad, they just capitalized really well. That was a really tough pill for us to swallow and it changed the whole feel and dynamic the rest of the way."

While on paper game three looked like a blowout win, Bailey said it was a tight game until a calamitous 20-second spell midway through the third where Newmarket rallied off two quickfire goals, giving then a 4-2 lead. They added gloss to the scoreline with an empty-netter with six seconds left on the clock.

That set up a do-or-die encounter in Minden March 12, where the Huskies kept things tight in a resolute defensive display – earning a 2-1 win.

Kieran Raynor levelled things seven minutes into the first after an early Hurricanes opener, with Luis Sturgeon slamming home the game-winner 16:56 into the middle period, beating Newmarket netminder Carter Froggett with a drive from the blueline. Kaiden Thatcher, Nate Taylor, Liam Oravsky and Isaac Larmand had assists in the win.

"That was the kind of performance we needed a couple other times this series," Bailey said. "That said, when you're down 3-0, you can have guys drift off and lose focus – we didn't see that at all. It was a great group effort, and we showed we weren't going to just roll over."

The team stood up to adversity again in game five. Going down 2-0 early on, the Huskies rallied with two power play goals in the second through Larmand and Carson Durnin. Goaltender Owen Edwards turned away 28 shots in the final two periods to send the game to overtime, but it wasn't to be for the hometown team.

Bailey reserved special praise for the Huskies fans, who created a special atmosphere inside S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena all season and travelled in droves to cheer the team on in Newmarket.

"We had one whole side behind our bench filled with Huskies fans there – I've said it multiple times, but the community support is amazing for this team. It gives the guys energy to dig in more and more every game," Bailey said.

Planning for next season

After a change in approach recruitment-wise this season, Bailey said there's potential for most of this Huskies team returning next year. Only four players – Christopher Brydges, Jack Cook, Nate Taylor and Carson Durnin are ineligible to play in 2026-27.

"We could have up to 20 of these guys back… it's a lot different from last year where we didn't have a lot of returning guys. We should have a really good foundation to build on," Bailey said.

Whether he'll be back behind the bench is unknown – Bailey said there will be conversations with general manager and new team owner, Ryan Ramsay, later this spring.

"I've loved my time in Haliburton. It has become my second home. If I was offered another contract to come back, It'd be hard to say no," he said.

He held exit interviews with players March 15, and the team had its end-of-season awards ceremony March 16. Planning for next season will commence soon, with a prospect camp running in Minden May 2-3.

Home of the Highland Storm

James Hamilton eludes two Brock Wild players March 12. *Photos by Adam Frisk.*

U13 Rep wrap up season

What an incredible season for our U13 Rep team.

From the first skate in September to the final buzzer, this group showed dedication, teamwork, and heart every step of the way. The players worked hard, supported one another, and grew tremendously both on and off the ice.

There were big wins, tough battles, and plenty of unforgettable moments along the way, including winning both the Regional and International Silver Stick tournaments.

Most importantly, this team showed what it truly means to compete with effort, respect, and pride every time they stepped on the ice.

After a hard-fought run, the team came up short in the semifinal against Brock Wild, but not without playing some very close and competitive games.

A huge thank you to our coaches for their commitment and leadership, and to our parents and families for their constant support throughout the season. And of course, congratulations to our players for giving it their all and representing the team so well.

We'll wrap up this fantastic season with our final tournament on the March 21 weekend in St. Catharines. Looking forward to one more great weekend together on the ice. Great season, great team, and great memories. Proud of this group. *(Submitted)*

STARS of the WEEK

MASON BISHOP

Mason Bishop stood tall in net, turning aside several quality chances. Without his effort, the scoreline could have been much wider.

KORA REID

Kora demonstrated great work ethic, consistently working hard along the boards and forechecking effectively.

JAMES HAMILTON

James displayed strong awareness and effort, reading the play and coming back hard on the backcheck.

Photos by Tim Tofflemire

SCORE BOARD

March 9
U11 rep Tom Prentice & Sons vs Ennismore 6-1 W *heading to OMHA red hats
U15 REP Cheryl Smith RE/MAX vs Mariposa 2-0 W
March 10
U13 rep Curry Chevrolet vs Brock 5-2 L
U15 The Pepper Mill Steak and Pasta House vs Lindsay 3-1 L
March 12
U9 Sharp Electric vs Lindsay 4-2 L
U9MD Haliburton Hockey Haven vs Mariposa 5-0 W
U13 Rep Curry Chevrolet vs Brock 2-1 L
March 14
U9 Sharp Electric vs Millbrook 7-1 W
March 15
U9 Cottage Country Building Supplies vs Brock 7-6 L
U9MD Haliburton Hockey Haven vs Douro 13-4 L
U18 rep Haliburton Timber Mart vs Newcastle 7-2 L

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What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m., youth dart league (ages 10-18) 6:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays: Cadets after school starts at 5 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Darts league 7 p.m. start.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo will resume in the spring.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, March to December; ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month, February to November.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prize each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets are $2 per draw; fun darts at 4:30 p.m. onwards; 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Clubroom hours: Monday 3-6 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' **Tuesday**.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541

Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. Darts March 23 and 30 at 7 p.m.
Tuesday: closed, special events only. Exercise club March 24 and 31 at 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Darts March 25 at 2 p.m.; quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m.; cribbage at 6:30 p.m.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. HHHS social rec March 26 at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m. Fish and chips March 20 from 5 to 8 p.m., with karaoke from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. March 13 and 27 is community care lunch at noon and wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. Meat draw March 21 and 28 at 3 p.m. Trivia March 28 at 7 p.m.
Sunday: closed, special events only.

Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 566 Cardiff

Hours: Sunday and Monday 3 to 6 p.m. and Thursday 3 to 9 p.m.
Events: Breakfast on the first Sunday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.; euchre on the second Sunday of each month at 12:30 p.m. Shuffleboard every Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. Music and jam session ever second Saturday of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. Everyone welcome.

EVENTS

March 21, 4:30 p.m. The Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve is hosting a macrame crafting workshop at its wolf centre. This session, for experienced crafters and beginners alike, will send you home with new skills and a unique nature-themed craft. Cost is $90. To reserve your spot, visit yoursoutdoors.ca or call 1-800-631-2198.

March 21, 5 p.m. The Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association is bringing its annual 'wild game dinner' back to Haliburton. Tickets are $60, with proceeds supporting HHOA operations. Call 705-457-9664 to book your seat, or drop by the HHOA fish hatchery at 6712 Gelert Rd. on Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

March 24, 1 to 5:30 p.m. Fleming Crew Employment Centre is hosting a job and volunteer fair at the Haliburton Legion. Meet employers to learn about job opportunities, discover community organizations seeking help, and access employment and skill upgrading services to help enhance your employability skills. Another session is scheduled April 8 at the Minden Community Centre from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

March 24, 7 p.m. Highlands Little Theatre presents *Calendar Girls* at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. Tickets are $25. Shows also run March 25 and 27 at 7 p.m. and March 28 at 2 p.m.

March 25, 7 to 9 p.m. The Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project is hosting its third information session 'behind the scenes of municipal leadership' at the Minden Community Centre. This event will feature testimonials from former local councillors Carol Moffatt, Andrea Roberts and Pat Kennedy. Free and open to everyone. Register online at www.hhhdp.ca.

March 26, 4 to 7 p.m. Talking Circles community session at Robert McCausland Memorial Community Centre. Sponsored by The Land Between and Indigenous partners, this is the first of a four-part series and will focus on changes to wetlands, forests and wildlife across our region. Free to attend.

March 27, overnight. Places for People is returning to Head Lake Park for its annual 'sleeping in cars' fundraiser. For one night, participants choose to step outside their comfort zone to better understand the reality many people face every day. Interested in participating, visit www.zeffy.com/en-CA/peer-to-peer/sleeping-in-cars--2026.

March 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Minden & District Horticultural Society is hosting its first ever 'Seedy Saturday' at the Minden Community Centre. There will be a seed exchange, demonstrations, vendor booths, advice clinic and kids activities. All are welcome.

March 28, noon to 3 p.m. Re/Max Professionals North is hosting a 'Spring Hop' Easter event at Head Lake Park. There will be an Easter egg hunt for kids, face painting, crafts and colouring, photos with the Easter Bunny and more. Money and food is being raised for the Haliburton 4Cs Food Bank.

March 28, noon to 7 p.m. Sir Sam's Ski/Ride is hosting its annual Spring Slash – try your luck at making it across the 80-foot pond. The duck derby follows the pond jumping.

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What's on

Event to educate veterans on supports

By Mike Baker

When Haliburton vet Nick Bryant came out of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1995, he had no idea just how much support was available to him through Veterans Affairs (VAC).

After serving 27 years in the Army, Bryant suffered with hearing loss and tinnitus. Years later, after becoming an active member at the Haliburton Legion, Bryant found out he qualified for compensation. He received a lump sum, which has helped him live his life in recent years. In the future, he expects to tap into programs that assist with housekeeping and snow removal.

The Legion is hosting a seminar March 22, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., with Marg Rohmann of Legion Ontario's central command coming to town to inform people about the kind of benefits available to them.

"If you had some sort of injury that was incurred while serving, you could get some help. There may be pension benefits available to you," Bryant said. "There's also money for hearing, dental – almost anything medical. There are also supports that will help you live a more comfortable life - all sorts of home care."

About 20 people attended last year's session, with Bryant saying he assisted 16 more throughout the year.

One person got money to pay off arrears that helped re-establish a hydro connection at their home, another was given fuel for heating purposes. Legion president Mike Waller said one man, who didn't realize he was a veteran, has received all sorts of support that has helped him turn his life around.

"It's really nice to be able to do this – now we want to get the word out to help as many people as we can," Waller said. "All of our veterans deserve it, whether they think they do or not."

Nick Bryant and Mike Waller said there will be lots of information at an upcoming veterans seminar March 22. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

Bryant said money is also available for mental health supports – particularly important for those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other ailments.

While Bryant said vets are renowned for foregoing support, he noted money is set aside each year purely to fund this initiative.

He wanted to set the record straight, too, on what constitutes a veteran.

"Everybody thinks a military vet is someone who went off to war, but it isn't. A veteran is a person who has completed basic training, either in the armed forces or in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and has been discharged with anything other than a dishonourable discharge," Bryant said.

"There are also some police forces who qualify, cadet instructors that were paid for their services… and it's not just the veterans themselves, these supports also extend to their spouses, dependents and caregivers.

"You don't even have to be a legion member to qualify. We're here for all veterans. And even if you don't need help today, knowledge is power – so come out and learn about what you may be entitled to in the future," he added.

Waller asked that anyone interested in attending RSVP by contacting 705-854-9237. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be rescheduled for March 29.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 911 • AFTER-HOURS MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY DIAL 1-866-856-3247 • WWW.MINDENHILLS.CA

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

March 26 – Regular Council Meeting
April 16 – Special Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

We are currently recruiting for the following vacancies:

• Public Works Labourer
• Cultural Centre Summer Students
• Part-Time Waste Facilities Operator

Please visit our website www.mindenhills.ca/careers for more information and how to apply.

SPRING LOAD RESTRICTIONS (HALF LOADS) IN EFFECT

Half Load weight restrictions are placed on roadways and posted each year in the spring for approximately 1-2 months. Persons contravening this regulation will be prosecuted under Section 122 of The Highway Traffic Act. Please watch for and obey posted signage.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

The Township of Minden Hills would like to partner with local service organizations to collect alcohol containers at one of our Transfer Station Sites. This partnership is a great opportunity to help organizations secure funding to support their efforts.

Why Partner with the Township?

• Your organization is publicly acknowledged in Township signage and communications
• You can contribute directly to the Township's waste diversion programs
• All proceeds from containers collected go directly to your organization
• Work closely with our dynamic waste management team

To submit your interest or for more information on this partnership arrangement, please email waste@mindenhills.ca

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• Don't miss the final week of the 3rd annual Archie Stouffer Student Art Exhibition, on display until March 21 in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.
• Join us for March Break Drop-In Programs at Nature's Place from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Each day will feature a mini discovery session followed by hands-on activities. Open to all ages (recommended for children 5–12). Admission is by donation.

Program Schedule:

March 18 – All About Wolves

March 19 – Incredible Insects with special guest - local entomologist, Baz Conlin.

March 20 – Creatures of the Night

• The UnFinished Objects (UFO) craft group will meet on Friday, March 20 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Join other local crafters in the Welch Room to work on your neglected projects. All are welcome.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

PROGRAMMING AT THE ARENA

There is a new set of evening youth programs ready for registration! Programs start the second week of April and run for 6 weeks. Check out the registration and options online at www.mindenhills.ca/recreation.

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GENERAL CARPENTRY – 40 years of experience. Small jobs welcome. Free quote. Call Bill at 705-372-3778

WANTED

J & D TOWING & SERVICE STATION - will pay top dollar for scrap cars. We also provide towing services as well as flat bed. Call Jim 705-447-2113

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PAINTER - Professional, experienced, and dependable painter available for residential and commercial projects — from a single room to an entire home or office. Minor repairs included at no additional charge. Call or text 647-213-2875 for a free estimate or call 705-447-2213

FOR SALE

FOR SALE – GUILFORD FIREWOOD – Nicely cut and split, ready to burn. $140. per face cord – pick up. Delivery available, call 705-754-3034

FOR SALE - Native pollinator plants for sale. Visit haliburton micromeadows.ca or email Baz Conlin at haliburtonmm@gmail.com for more info. Pre-sales running until April 20th.

FOR RENT

FOR RENT - One bedroom upper level apartment, screened porch, satellite TV, walking distance to downtown, schools & hospital. No pets, non-smoker, $1,500.00 per month includes heat, hydro, a/c and satellite TV. Call 705-455-9878

FOR RENT - Basement apartment for rent,1 bdrm, full kitchen including dishwasher, 1 x 3 piece bath. Freshly painted, bright and spacious with personal laundry and infloor heating. NOTE: There are two sets of stairs to the apartment. All inclusive rent of $1800 covers heat/A/C, hydro, septic, water, internet, lawn care and snow removal. Between Haliburton and Gooderham on Glamorgan Rd. Available now. Call/text for more info 705-306-0581

HELP WANTED

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**HHHS LTC Homes also participate in incentive funding to attract Personal Support Workers through Ontario Health*

We can't wait to hear from you!

Apply to HR@hhhs.ca

HELP WANTED

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton Requires:

One (1) Cybersecurity Analyst

Reporting to the Director of IT, the newly created role of Cybersecurity Analyst provides functional leadership for the County's cybersecurity program and leads day-to-day information security operations The successful applicant will possess post-secondary education in IT or a related discipline and three (3) years of progressive experience. This position is eligible for remote work.

One (1) Administrative Clerk

Reporting to the Executive Assistant, the Administrative Clerk provides a range of clerical and administrative support such as preparing meeting materials, taking minutes, maintaining filing systems. The successful candidate will possess related administrative experience and demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Office 365. The 2026 hourly rate for this unionized CUPE 1960 position is $27.00.

Full-time employment with the County of Haliburton includes participation in the OMERS defined benefit pension program and comprehensive, employer paid extended healthcare benefits.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than **March 20, 2026, at 4:30pm**.

We thank all who apply for this position; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,* the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

HELP WANTED

Property Manager

Love the outdoors?

Camp Towhee is hiring a **Property Manager** to maintain cabins, trails, docks, and facilities at CDI's therapeutic summer camp for youth.

Hands-on maintenance experience required. Seasonal contract May–Sept. Valid driver's licence required.

Pay is $62,400 annualized (pro-rated for the contract) plus $2,050 completion bonus.

To learn more and apply, please visit:
https://childdevelop.ca/about-us/join-our-team

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HELP WANTED

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton is currently recruiting for the following seasonal roles:

One (1) Seasonal 1 Operator/Labourer
DZ licence and experience with road maintenance and repair required. Hourly rate is $28.43. Unionized CUPE position.

Three (3) Flagperson/ Labourer(s)
G licence and experience in manual labour positions required. Hourly rate is $21.28. Unionized CUPE position.

One (1) Engineering (Seasonal) Student
G licence and current enrolment in an engineering program required. Hourly rate is $26.36. Unionized CUPE position.

One (1) Seasonal Capital Projects Inspector
G licence and at least five (5) years of related municipal experience. Hourly rate is $36.08. Unionized CUPE position.

Applications

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for detailed postings and job descriptions. Forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than **March 27, 2026**.

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.
The County of Haliburton is an equal employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.
In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,* the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

Camp White Pine is seeking **Laundry and Cleaning Staff**. May to October or Summer Only. 2-3 positions available. Weekend work required. Starting at $21/hr.

Email: info@campwhitepine.com **call:** 416-322-6250

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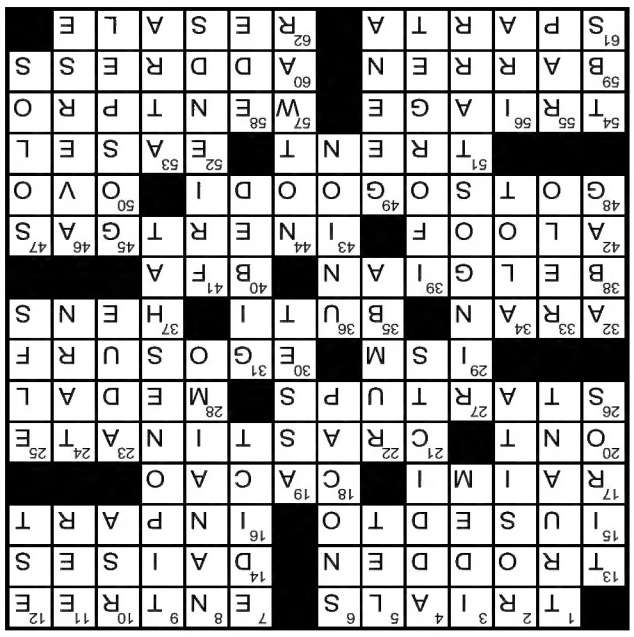
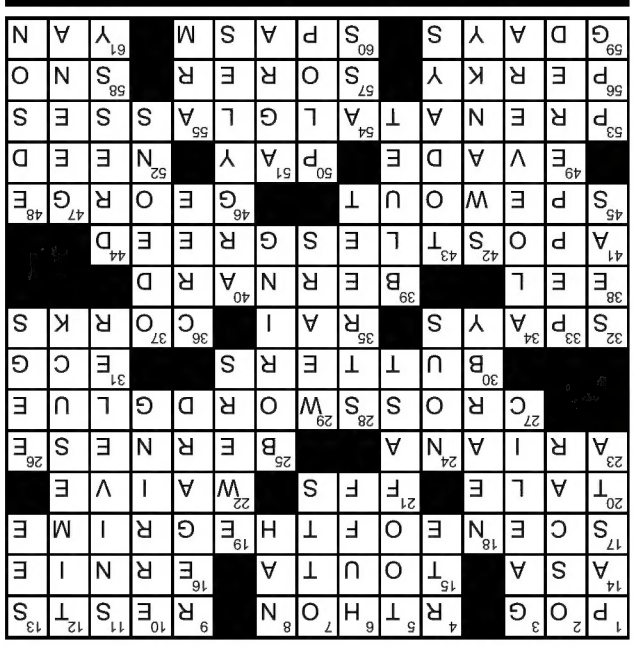


THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS



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3	5	9	4	7	1	6	2	8
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6	3	1	5	4	9	2	8	7
8	4	5	2	1	7	9	3	6
9	2	7	3	8	6	4	1	5

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Donald Lindsay Ballantyne

(April 26, 1937- March 5, 2026)

It is with love and profound gratitude for a life well lived that we announce the peaceful passing of our father, Donald Lindsay Ballantyne, on the morning of March 5th, 2026, at Hyland Crest Retirement Home.

Don was born to Reginald and Mae Ballantyne April 26, 1937, in Regina, Saskatchewan. The family soon after moved to Toronto, where his sister, Jean, was born. Don spent his early years developing a love for cottage country, hunting and fishing with his best friend Robert Willson, and cheering on his beloved hockey team, the Toronto Maple Leafs. But his world was forever changed when he met the love of his life, Nancy.

Don and Nancy were married Oct 5, 1960, in East Kilbride, Scotland. They had four children, Rob, Jane, Linda and John and eventually settled in Scarborough. He had a thriving career that had him employed with General Electric, General Foods, GSW and Standard Modern Technologies. He steadily worked his way up through corporations and was part of many innovations, including restaurant chains like The Crock and Block and even the creation of peach flavoured Jello and Pop Rocks. Later in his career, he and Nancy opened Aquarium Services pet stores in Hamilton.

But more than anything, our dad was defined by his enthusiasm for leisure activities. An avid sports enthusiast, he loved hockey, curling, golf, fishing and hunting. He instilled these passions in his children, managing hockey teams, curling in family bonspiels and, of course, taking them fishing... insisting each kid was given their own fishing rod at the age of 10. He taught us that if you caught a "keeper" you were responsible for cleaning it and that the fish were biting best when it rained. This we learned at 7 am one rainy morning... as he stayed in bed.

The cottage was his special place. Little Canning Lake was his version of heaven... and it grew to be ours as well. He loved the cottage life and noted each time he left to go back to the city that the sun was on the rocks-- begging him to stay. He'd say, "One day I'll retire up at the cottage". In time, he and Mum finally realized their dream and retired up north to Little Canning Lake. Dad and Mum took to the Minden life with ease. They joined the Minden Curling Club, were active members of Minden United Church, formed bridge clubs and forged strong friendships with many locals. They were living their best life.

Perhaps Dad and Mum's greatest source of pride and joy were the happy marriages of all four children... which in turn gave them their 12 grandchildren and 4 great- grandchildren. They loved their grandkids and loved even more hearing about the trials and tribulations each one brought to their parents. Typical of Dad, on their 10 th birthdays he gave each a fishing rod. He also insisted on taking all the grandchildren to Disney World where they were to meet the "other woman in his life" -- Minnie Mouse. These magical moments inspired unique generational relationships and fueled many classic Grampa stories from the kids.

The years marched on and when the cottage surroundings became unsafe in their later years, Dad and Mum moved into a condo on Head Lake in Haliburton but insisted the cottage still be available to the family. Ultimately the two ended up in Hyland Crest

Long-term Care where Mum continues to reside. And of course, on Dad's final day of life, with a spectacular sunset, the sun was on the rocks.

Don is survived by his wife Nancy, children Rob (Sarah Wood), Jane (John Macpherson), Linda (Jim Kinney) and John (Linda Hutton), his grandchildren Sarah (Chris Woodward), Lauren (Ben Sadowski), Brian, Madeline, Shea, Jackie, Mark, Ben, Sam, Arden, Jack and Ray, and great-grandchildren Emma, Brady, Alice and Theo.

A private family memorial for Don will be held this summer at Little Canning Lake. Special thanks to the kind and caring staff at Hyland Crest Long-term Care. In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the Minden Food Centre and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario KoM 2Ko.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

In Loving Memory of

Thomas Byng

Thomas Byng passed away peacefully at home on March 8th, leaving behind a lifetime of stories, friendships, and quiet acts of kindness.

Thomas was the kind of person people were instantly drawn to. With his infectious laugh and generous spirit, he had a way of making everyone feel welcome and valued. Conversations with Thomas rarely stayed small for long — they quickly turned into genuine connection.

He carried a deep enthusiasm for life and approached it with curiosity, resilience, and humour, even when faced with difficult moments. Those who knew him will remember not only what he said or did, but how he made people feel — respected, included, and cared for.

He will be deeply missed by his wife, Cathy Mauro; his daughters, Sam and Morgan Byng, and the many friends and family whose lives he touched.

As per his wishes he's been cremated and a celebration of life will be held in the warmer months, north of the GTA.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the charity of your choice;

"do kind acts for others; and engage with nature (and remember to pick up the garbage others left behind)."

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EVENT

EVENT - STAINED GLASS WORKSHOPS from beginner up. Learn the art of Stained Glass in one or two day classes.. Call Tom at 705-286-3628

NOTICE

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS - Sundays - 10:30 am at St. Anthony's, 27 Victoria Street Haliburton. Wednesdays - 7:00 PM at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St. in Minden - rear door. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We've been there. We can help!

AL ANON- WE CARE, are you troubled by someone's drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony's 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org All are welcome.

Highlander puzzles

Oh, Geez!

by Barbara Olson
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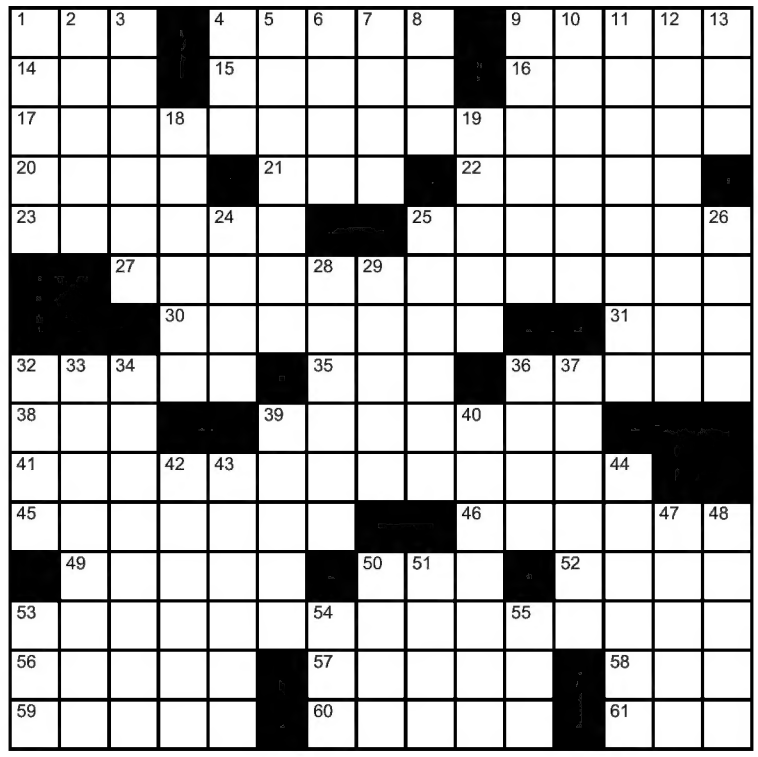

Across

1 Harley motorcycle, to riders
4 P.M's title of respect
9 Short stops on a score
14 Neat-pin link
15 ___ fait (French "totally")
16 Muppet in a bathtub
17 Where Santa's suit got sooty?
20 Word with fairy or folk
21 Very-loud signs, in music
22 Forgo enforcing
23 Singer Grande
25 Mountain dog breed
27 Aid if this puzzle gets ripped?
30 Strategically flatters, with "up"
31 Murmur detector, for short
32 Avoids a kitty litter
35 Aishwarya of Bollywood
36 Wine bottler's supply
38 Electric swimmer
39 Shaw's middle name
41 Hoggishness at the Last Supper?
45 Eject forcefully, as lava
46 Shaw's first name
49 Cleverly dodge
50 Shell out
52 On a ___-to-know basis
53 Eyewear for a myopic embryo?
56 Well-rested and caffeined up, maybe
57 More ticked
58 ___-Caps (Nestle candy)
59 Down Under greetings
60 Little jerk
61 TV chef who wore punny aprons

Down

1 " ___ la vista, baby!"
2 Muppet in a trash can
3 Dialect of some Cape Bretoners
4 Bus driver's course: Abbr.
5 Over the speed limit
6 ___ and puff
7 Hockey's Steve and baseball's Mel
8 "Let's don't"
9 Look at attentively
10 Flubbing
11 Blubbering whiner
12 Unproductive activity, like constant Insta scrolling
13 "Get it?"
18 Not far off
19 Water pitchers
24 Toi et moi
25 Classical art theory to a tween, likely
26 Brain activity tests, for short
28 Toronto's Bloor or Yonge
29 Becomes threadbare
32 Pirates' bodies
33 Bombarded, as with questions
34 Healing succulent
36 Canada's largest First Nation
37 Ancient Greek theatres
39 Flower also called "Quaker-lady"
40 Diamond-patterned socks
42 Very swish
43 Word before "special," on a menu
44 A bit formal
47 "The Accidental Tourist" actress Davis
48 Yellowhead town west of Edmonton
50 Alka Seltzer sound, in an ad
51 "Slumdog Millionaire" city
53 NBA scoring stat
54 Jack or jenny
55 "Jab" target

Looking for ladies that played soft-ball multiple years from 1960-89!

The Haliburton County Ladies Softball League are being honoured in the Haliburton County Hall of Fame!

Please contact me if you played and can attend. **Induction is 2pm, May 23rd.**
Also looking for action shots, please send to: **cheryl_greg4@hotmail.com**

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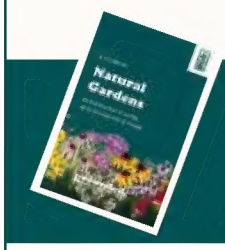

For a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca.

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6			7	1	2		4	
				4			3	
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